

ESSAYS

Towards A
UNION
BETWEEN
Divinity and Morality,
Reason, or Natural Religion,
AND
REVELATION.

Calculated to the Meridian of our present
Differences in Church and State.

HEB. VIII. 10.

*Whom God hath joyned together, let no
man put asunder.*

*Per Gulielmum Liberum Clavem,
Armigerum.*

LONDON:

Printed in the Year MDCCLXXXIX.

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Christianity and Morality

Religion or Natural Religion

AND

REVELATION

As far as the Principles of our Religion
are concerned in Church and State

HEE VII 10

When God hath joined together, let no
man put asunder.

By William Lisle Garrison
Author

LONDON

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PREFACE.

I *IS not my Custom, when I Entertain my Friend, to pall his Appetite with a Complement, to let his Meat and Fancy cool, before he falls to; I love all things in season, Preface enough, to show my Reader he is Welcome; and to discover what his Entertainment is like to be, and then to dismiss him, to give him the freedom of my Provisions.*

My Bill of Fare, Gentlemen, is nothing but a few Dishes of plain-drest Meat, very agreeable to a temperate and sound Digestion I am perswaded; but I must needs say, if any Man has been us'd too much to a French Cook, to the made Dishes of Hypocrisy, Faction, and Prejudice, 'twill be apt to rise in his Stomack; 'tis a kind of Physical Dyet in its Nature, it nourishes the sound, but it is a sharp Purge to those that are disorder'd.

If thou art already wedded to thine Opinion, beg thee never to read me; I am always of the Opinion of my Reason, my Judgment, my present Conviction, I cannot but believe the Sun shines when I see it: I shall turn to any Man's Opinion, that happens to convince me, and why then shouldest thou have an inevitable Quarrel, where we can neither have hopes or prospect of Reconciliation?

But if thou art so hardy to run the same Fate with me; or, if thou hast Charity enough, not only

P R E F A C E.

to forgive my variances from thee, but heartily and sincerely to endeavour to put me in a better way, if thou thinkest I err, thou art welcome, doubly welcome: I love those that love and search Truth, from my Soul, and thou shalt be even as an Angel of God to me.

As for my Method, I have studied to be short; and I could wish I could express a Sentence by a Word, for I hate to put any one to more pains than necessary; besides, when any thing is large or tedious in expression, it loses its delicate Life, its forcive Pourtrature or Idea upon our Understandings.

I shall shut up all, with doing Justice to some few Authors I have borrow'd from, as Bacon's Essays, The Country Parson's Advice to his Parishioners, and a Pamphlet or two. I might have disguis'd their sense by new words, but as I liked their styles too well, so I am not asham'd in many places to Copy them; for my part, I know no evil in borrowing from another, since 'tis certain, as the Wise Man says, There is nothing new under the Sun, but Method, and present Disposition, and that I am sure is my own.

Farewel.

ESSAYS

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Towards A

UNION

BETWEEN

Divinity and Morality, &c.

 PART I. CAP. I.

Atheism,

I HAD rather believe all the Fables in the *Legend, Talmud, and Alcoran*, than think that this Universal Frame is without a Mind, and therefore God never wrought a Miracle to convince an Atheist, because his ordinary Works convince him; and though 'tis true, a little Philosophy may incline a man's Mind to Atheism, yet the depth of it brings mens minds about to Religion; for while we look on second Causes scatter'd and confus'd, we may sometimes rest on them, but when we behold the Chain of them confederate and linked together, we must needs fly to Providence and a Deity.

The Scripture saith, *The Fool hath said in his heart there is no God*; but not that the Fool hath thought in his Heart so, that he rather says it by rote, as what he would have, than what he could thoroughly believe; for few or none deny God, but those for whom it makes best, if there were none.

To shew you the despondency of Atheists of the truth of their Cause, there is nothing more convincing, than that they are always talking of their Opinion, as if they fainted in it, and would be glad to be strengthened by the consent of others; indeed Atheism gives us no settlement for our Doubts, has no centre to rest our Thoughts on.

Pure, Contemplative Atheists are rare, and fewer such as dare own their Opinions, by themselves in the dark; they seem numerous, because all that impugn a receiv'd Religion, or Superstition, are by the adverse Parry branded with the name of Atheists; but the great Atheists indeed are Hypocrites, which handle Holy things, but without feeling, seeming in the end as if they were insensible, and Cauteriz'd.

The Causes of Atheism are, first, Church-Divisions; 'tis true, one main one only, adds Zeal to both sides; but many, introduce Confusion and Atheism. A Second Cause is, the Scandal of Priests. A Third, a Custom of profane Scoffing, which by little and little defaces the Reverence of Religion. The Fourth and last, Learned and Peaceable Times; the first confound Religion too much in Speculation, and the latter drowns its Zeal and Practice in Luxury and Ease.

To conclude, Atheism is not only most unreasonable, but most injurious to us; it robs us of the Immortality of the Soul, it levels us to Beasts, it takes away our *melior natura*, our spur to great Actions; for even as a Dog and Horse increase their Courage by being back'd and heartned by Man, so Man even doubles his Resolutions and Performances, by his reliance, his trust and confidence in God.

Nay, indeed, if there were no God, our deceit in believing in him would be highly beneficial to us; it preserves Justice, tames our Passions, so that as no Man
has

has a certainty that there is no God, without he is so weak as to prove a Negative. so is he mad, that will rashly hazard the offending him, by maliciously injuring us, and haughtily interrupting the Order of his Creation, by denying his Existence, though we have only slender and probable Evidence of it.

C A P. II

Superstition.

THE Master of Superstition, is the People; the Process, Wise Men are forc'd to follow Fools; its support, Arguments are fitted to Practice in an invers'd Order: 'Twas prettily and gravely reflected on the School-Men in the Council of *Trent*, that like Astronomers, they feigned Eccentricks and Epicycles, and such Engines of Orbs, to save their *Phænomena*, though they knew there were no such things.

To describe the Effects and Ills of Superstition, were to draw a Scheme of Immorality; there was never any Ill yet so great, that Superstition has not promoted: Superstition daily makes Subjects kill their innocent Kings, Sons, Murder their Fathers; Superstition makes nothing of Rapes, Perjury, Falseness, Dishonesty; indeed it makes both Men and Nations where it dwells, mad, were it not that there is so many of them, for only Number is their Justification and Protection.

Further, it were better to have no Opinion of God at all, than such as is unworthy of him; the first is but Unbelief, the other Contumely; indeed a Reproach of the Deity, as *Plutarch* saith, *I had rather a great deal that Men should say, there was no such Man as Plutarch, than that there was one Plutarch, that would eat his Children as soon as they were Born.*

Atheism leaves a Man to Sense, Philosophy, Laws, and Reputation, all which may be Guides towards an outward Moral Vertue, though Religion were not; but Superstition dismounts all these, erects a Devilish,

Senseless, Absolute Monarchy in our Minds, brings in a new *Primum Mobile*, ravishes all the Spheres of Government, dethrones Natural Affection, makes us Sacrifice our Children, Brethren, and Friends; in short, subverts the whole Law of Nature.

The Causes of Superstition are, First, Pleasing and Sensual Rights and Ceremonies, an excess of outward and *Pharisaical* Holiness. Secondly, The over-great Holiness and Reverence placed in uncertain Tradition. Thirdly, The Stratagems of Prelates for their own Ambition and Lucre. Fourthly, The favouring too much good Intention, which opens the Gate to Conceit and Novelties. Fifthly, and Lastly, Barbarous Times, especially joyn'd with Calamities and Disasters; for though Ignorance and Affliction be the Mothers of Devotion, yet are they the ready Roads to Superstition.

But indeed there is another kind of Superstition in avoiding Superstition, when Men think they do best, when they go farthest from the Superstition formerly received; therefore care should be had, as it fareth in all Purgings, the good be not taken away with the bad, which too commonly is done, when the People are the Reformers.

To conclude, Superstition is a most deformed thing; for, as it adds Deformity to an Ape, to be so like a Man; so the Similitude of Superstition to Religion, makes it more deformed; and as wholsome Meats corrupt to little Worms, so good Forms and Orders degenerate by Superstition into innumerable, almost petty Observances.

CAP. III.

Souls Immortality.

IN a Parable, like our Saviour's, we might prettily imagine this World a Garden, God the Gardiner, and our selves the Plants; those Souls that prove well in his Nursery, by Death he transplants to an happy Eternity; those that be crooked and ill-favour'd, he reserves as useless, for Fewel.

Now, the Substance of this Soul, as it is insensible, so is it not to be conceiv'd by us; but as for **its** abilities, they are apparent, and we sufficient Judges of them: The First, is a general View, and Prudence; the Second, a particular Sight, or Understanding; the Third, an Invention; the Fourth, Recollection, or Memory; the Fifth, Judgment; and the Sixth, a Transition. But as these are only Speculations in it, so are its real Actions confin'd to the narrow Powers of a Body.

Thus the Soul in the Body, like God in the World, remains invisible to the Eye; yet he must be as great a Block-head, or as wilfully blind as an Atheist, that cannot discern its Preheminence and Excellency above Matter, and that from its very Operations; nay, considering the Enjoyments of ill Men, and the Misfortunes of good Men in this Life, we cannot in Justice to God apprehend, but that both the Soul is Immortal, and that there is a future Judgment.

You cannot think the Soul Immortal; thou Fool, dost thou believe that thou art at all? Cannot he that made a Being, give it continuance? Why shouldst thou blaspheme so weakly the Power of God? Thou shouldst not therefore argue, whether the Soul can be Immortal, but whether 'tis likely God will make it so; and who can doubt that, be sure he will not make the best part of his Creation perishable, and the worst, not; the World and Elements thus to last, and the nobler Being, Man's Rational Soul, to dye.

CAP.

CAP. IV.

Faith.

FAith is the Evidence of things unseen, approved of, the Leader of the Just, and that Road by which all Holy Men have made their approaches unto God; 'tis Faith is our true Monitor, the Scourge of Conscience, that frights us from Evil by the presence of God, and encourages us in Good, by the certainty of his Cognizance, and Reward of it.

Faith is the first footing of the Holy Ghost in our Souls, and answers to wilful Ignorance, and perverseness in Sin; 'tis our first Lesson, its Original may be either from the Conviction of Reason, or Revelation. And when the Holy Ghost has convinc'd us of Faith, his next and second Lesson is Obedience: And indeed, what is Faith, if it sprout not up to Charity? *The Devils believe, and tremble.*

'Tis a misapprehension of Faith, to think it's in the Will, whereas Faith is purely an intellectual Act, and the Will is no otherwise concern'd in it, than in suffering the Intellect to act freely, and without prejudice.

For as Faith is our consent to the Evidence of some unseen Matter, from its Operations, and our Reasonings on Matters visible; and as such consent, or judgment is impossible to be forc'd, so it is absurd and tyrannous, to expect Faith without good Evidence; blind Concurrency indeed, and Hypocritical Submission may follow absolute Commands, but real Faith is only created and constituted by sound Evidence and Reason.

CAP. V.

Of Natural Religion.

THere are but two Methods that can engage a Creature to Worship his Creator, Natural Religion, and Revelation; Natural Religion is that Obligation that depends upon a Man's own Reasoning, and ought to have a perpetual eye upon us, till we are convinc'd of the reality and goodness of a Revelation.

Further, as Revelation and Natural Religion are equally the Law and Will of God, and so it is impossible they should vary; so, whoever embraces Revelation, against the Principles of Natural Religion, errs fundamentally; and as there's no other Touch-stone, to know the true, and the truth of that Revelation, but Natural Religion; so, by doing so, a Man flings away his Guide, and walks blind-fold.

The Scriptures assure us of our safety under Natural Religion, *Rom. 1. 20, 21. Rom. 2. 11. Lev. 20. 24. Deut. 9. 4. Acts 10. 35. 1 Tim. 4. 10.* And that our Consciences therein are to be our Judges, *Rom. 2. 14, 15.* for they tell us, that we can only know Trees by their Fruits, *Mat. 7. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. 2 Thess. 2. 8, 9, 10. Deut. 18. 22.* And not only so, but they exhort us to approve the Scriptures themselves, upon the evidence of their sincerity and truth, *John 8. 45, 46. John 10. 37, 38. Acts 17. 11.* and to avoid a Teacher, tho' an Angel, against this Rule.

But the Force and Authority of Natural Religion appears more plainly by the Apostles Argument, *Where there is no Law, there is no sin:* And by our Saviour's, *If you had been blind, you had had no sin.* And thus Joseph, that swore by the Life of Pharaoh, Jacob and David, that had several Wives and Concubines, were Men thoroughly pleasing to God, and yet lived in manifest defiance of his present Laws and Commandments.

How-

However, in this Ignorance God requires our observance of what we think our Duty, be it so, or not; he delights not that we should live without a Law, tho' he wills us to know and observe the true one; this we may easily collect from what *St. Paul* writes to the *Corinthians*, concerning Meats offered unto Idols, where he wills not weaker Christians to defile their Consciences, and yet he perswades them to Knowledge.

To conclude, I cannot but admire how uncharitable and senseless some are, who damn all before Christ, and most since, who deny the efficacy of Natural Religion, and allow nothing saving, but Faith in Christ; blind Guides, that because Christ says, *that they that believe not, shall be damn'd*, to terrifie the wilfully ignorant and perverse; therefore that Sentence must pass on those, that by no possibility can hear of him; a pretty proud Monopoly of Salvation.

C A P. VI.

Reason.

IT has been a fatal Error in these latter Ages of the World, to dethrone Reason, Sacred Wisdom, and set up implicate Faith and Respect of Persons in her Empire; what can one say to such Monsters? who by Reason hope to shew Reason has no force, or is not to be our Guide; that set up Implicate Faith, which turns Weather-cock to every Wind; and Respect of Persons, which is as uncertain as men's Fancies, before Reason, pure Divine Reason and Wisdom; nay, as if God should extirpate the Plant he first set.

Persons may receive Reflections, but Reason Divine Wisdom, and Reason derides her Scorners, and soaring higher than their conceited Fancies, and reaching lower than their dark Fallacies, unravels their little Arts, laughs at their petty Flights, whilst she stands clear, undaunted, and triumphant, above their reach.

Tis,

'Tis true, if Reason be not well digested, the Steel not well hardned, or softned by the Allay of baser Metals, better Reason, purer Steel, may cut and dissolve it; but Masters in such Metals are commonly modest, and I can easily submit to the censure of their Files, and I am sure they will excuse me, if I have not stooped to a stile unworthy of my Subject in this matter.

Further, 'twere absurd to fancy that Reason should be fickle, in her choice of Religion; how stable does a well-establish'd judgment behave it self like a Rock amongst the giddy Opinions of the World, whilst Superstition whistles and wavers like a Butter-fly? For instance, because I cannot believe the straw and stubble built on Christianity, the nick-knacks of Sects and Parties, yet that cannot discharge me of a main and steady Faith, of the Revelation, of the certain Tradition, of Christ's Doctrine, Miracles, and Resurrection, even before five hundred at once: This is an Evidence uncommon, sufficient to preserve Reason from fickleness, or else I know not what can; this is an Evidence agreeable to so great a design of God, as his Revelation.

Tradition and Fathers are but as Land-marks in Religion; would not a Man think him mad, who will leave his Road of Reason, giddily to follow fallible Land-marks? Indeed Land-marks are comfortable, when they are set by good Men, and in our Road, as Christ and his Apostles are: But as there are Land-marks, even to Hell, so our only way to know and avoid them, is, because they are out of our way, our Road of Reason, and consequently, but decoys and delusions.

Reason is an infallible Road to God; indeed, to some Men 'tis more Bryery, more Miry and troublesome, than to others, because they do not add Consideration and Wisdom to it; but without following Reason, 'tis impossible to be saved; when Men follow implicate Faith, because they reason it the best, I believe them safe, tho' under a hard Master; but when Men know Reason to be their Guide, and yet turn aside to a Land-mark, I say, tho' it bear the Name of Christ, I doubt of their guilt: I am sure Christ leadeth no Man out of his way. *See an ingenious and modest little Treatise, called,*
 Humane Reason. CAP.

CAP. VII.

Tradition, Fathers.

WHEN I reflect on the Causes of Religious Distractions, I cannot but retreat to Tradition, and the excessive Reverence of the Fathers, as the Chief and Principal; hence comes that hagg'd Principle, Implicite Faith; that Monster, that Men are ashamed to own in Name, tho' they so much adore her in Practice; that blackest Imp of Superstition.

Had our Implicite Faith-men the Courage to Reason, I would expostulate a little with them; I would fain know what they mean by Tradition; is it what they receive from Mouth to Mouth, or in Writing? If the first, pray from which Sect, or Party must I receive it? For my part, I see no way of ending this Controversie; but by Reason, and may be she, when she examines, likes none of the Traditions.

Is Tradition then to come from Writings from the Fathers? Well, grant it is; I want to know, who are Orthodox Fathers, who not; whose Writings are genuine, whose sophisticate; whose entire, and whose corrupted, by the *Index Expurgatorius*; nay, I want to know too, who are Fathers, Men of the first, second, third, or what Century: And what then? After I have spent Ten years; and found an uncertain certainty, of who are Orthodox, Genuine, not Corrupted, and of the allow'd Century, I will just credit what they say; as I do the Author of the Whole Duty of Man, a good, pious, fallible Author.

Whither shall I follow this Maze, this Labyrinth? Do not Men want *Hellebore*, that forsake Reason, to follow Fathers? Were this Madness in any thing but Religion, Men would seek to Physicians to Cure it; but Superstition, blind Superstition, makes it not only tolerable; but popular.

That

That Man has a Face of Brass, that denies the contradictionness of the Fathers, how they write one against another; *St. Austin* wrote a Book of Recantation, and scarce one of them, but what in one point or other, contradicts himself; how much more do they contradict one another? So that they become like Noses of Wax, every Sect pretends the Fathers, and every one cites some places, in confirmation of their Party.

To conclude, the Fathers are not only fallible, but infinite, as it were; you say, one Father says this, what then, if he contradict himself, or another contradict him, what must we believe? If you produce these words, must I search the Fathers over, to see whether they were generally consented to? That's a work of an Age, trifling. If I do not, must I therefore submit, against Reason? O, Mad Folly! the very Reading of the Fathers attentively, is enough for one Man's Age.

C A P. VIII.

Martyrs, Confessors.

TIS a Notion in the World, God knows, as fond as false, That Martyrs, and Dying-mens words confirm the Truth of a Doctrine; this is most certain, their Death confirms their hearty belief in a Doctrine; but to confirm the truth of it, were to confirm Repugnances, since there have been Martyrs in all Cases.

That, *Sanguis martirum, est semen Ecclesie*, I do not in the least deny; but 'tis not the truth of their Cause, so much spreads their Doctrine, as their Sufferings; Men generally entertaining their Faith on half Examination, Implicite Faith, the Authority of the Church, &c. like it, or dislike it more, according to its Fruits and Works, than Truth; thus, tho' the Persecutor be otherwise Catholick, and the persecuted Heretick, yet because the one is Tyrannous in Punishments, the other brave in Sufferings, this one Idea quite alters the sense of

of their Church: Besides, that some Men take Pride in Sufferings, and rather chuse to be Self-murderers, than not Martyrs; and refuse to flee from City to City, first, as we are enjoyn'd.

Further, there is a second Error in the Idea of true Martyrdom, as fond, and as false, and yet as common as the first; to wit, that Men ought only to Martyr for main truths of Religion; whereas, we should rather Martyr, than Lye, than Flatter, than do the least Evil; yet not, but that a Man has Liberty left him, in all Cases too, to flee from City to City, from Country to Country, to refuse to cast Pearl before Swine, and to avoid Self-Accusation, as Christ did before Pilate, to avoid it.

C A P. IX.

Religion, or Revelation, Choice, or Propagation.

I Have now by the Title Atheism, shewn the necessity of a Deity; by Superstition, the danger of Abuses in Religious Worship; by the Immortality of the Soul, the weightiness of Religion; by Faith, how to make your first step in it; after this, I have set forth to you, the common Guides in Religion, Natural Religion, and Reason, Tradition, Authority of Fathers, and Implicit Faith, and Martyrs, and Confessors; what remains, after these, is to instruct you, how by your Guides to make Choice of your particular Religion, or Revelation.

As there is but one God, and as from the perfection of his Will and Wisdom, we may well conclude, he has but one Revelation and Worship; so, were it even Blasphemy to the Justice of God, to say, he required our assent to that Religion, or Revelation, and yet left us no means to discern it.

As

As for Implicite Faith, whether it proceed from the Tradition of Word, or Fathers, the Authority of the Church, or Martyrs and Confessors, 'tis a meer Tool, a Priest-craft Engine; and one would think Men's Souls drunk with *Opium*, to rely on it, it serves for all Religions; all Colours appear alike in the dark: And therefore to allow that as our Guide, were to confound our Choice; if therefore there be any Guide, 'tis Reason, whatever Revelations, Precepts, are most reasonable, that must needs be the true one, and the only one that can come from God.

What, are we bound then to examine all Revelations? Yes, if the present do not satisfy our Reason, we are bound to Worship God the best way we can; nay, if the present do satisfy us, if another offer to argue with us, we ought always to be passive to Reasoning, and hear him; I do not doubt, but a Man may be as well damn'd for wilful Ignorance and Perverseness against the Conviction of Mahumetism, as of Christianity; and that tho' he be a Christian, 'tis a Duty necessary to a sound Faith, always to follow the greater, the surer Light and Conviction.

But to illustrate this further, tho' I am bound to follow the true Revelation, if it offer, yet I am rather bound to follow Natural Religion, than ransack the World for it, and not only neglect other Duties, but confound, distract, and destroy my self in the search. If it be in my Country, my Neighbourhood, I owe so much to God in Prudence, as to enquire after it; but to search the World around for the true Religion, were a Zeal worthy a great Prince, but in a private Man presumption and folly.

So likewise in propagating Religion, if I have a Commission from God by Visions, and have his Seal, to confirm my Doctrine by Miracles, I am bound to obey my Creator, to range, like the Apostles, the World around, to serve him; but if I have no such Commission, no such Seal, if I am only empower'd by him, through the Sacred Law of Nature, by Natural Religion, or Reason, interpreting Revelations, I am only bound, in Charity, to instruct my Neighbourhood, by writing, speak-

ing, or as otherwise Opportunity offers, and if Strangers like my Advice, they may take it; but for any Man to impose himself further, is to set the World into a flame of blind and endless Zeal, and Contention.

To conclude, Natural Religion is the Law of God equally, as well as Revelation; now, as sound Reason is the Law of Natural Religion; and as it is impossible the Laws of God should vary, so cannot possibly any thing in the true Revelation contradict Reason, or the Law of Natural Religion; nay, not only so, but in the true Revelation; wheresoever Scriptures are so urg'd, or translated, as to be unreasonable, we may assure our selves, we have not the right sense, we ought to examine further, and in doing that, rather consult Reason than Philology (tho' neither are to be neglected) for our solution.

St. John, 1 John 4.1. bids us not believe every Spirit; and the Example of the Prophet, 1 Kings 13. is sufficient to shew us, that the trusting God's Ministers against his known and express Will and Commands, will not be sufficient to bear us harmless; nay, the very reason why thy Berean Christians were particularly stiled Noble, was, because they examined the Scriptures, and took them not upon Trust.

(451)

C A P. X

Scripture Authority.

TWERE Arrogance in any Man, to give rash censures of the Scriptures, or to be too free in a diminishing Character of them; but on the other side, 'twould be as great a weakness to be so dazzled with the view of them, as not to give one's self the Privilege of examining and understanding them; and indeed, who is so blind, as not to see the difference of the several Copies and Translations of them?

Undoubtedly the Men that wrote them, were good Men, were directed by the Holy Ghost; but to what degree they had his assistance, that I think a point disputable; I must confess, I am not of Opinion that they had a total guidance; in main Truths I believe they had his Direction; in lesser matters, I conceive, they were left to their own Integritys, and Discretions.

Revelation indeed was necessary to propose our Reasons, the matters of Fact relating to our Saviour, to oblige us, to convince us, and rouse us up to our Duty of Religion by so excellent an Example; and some Pattern-Precepts to conduct us sincerely to the Sacred Law of Nature; but to expect that all the particulars, of the Will, of the infinite God, should be express'd in Scripture, were equally vain and weak.

St. Peter was not satisfied by Inspiration, that he might Preach to the Gentiles; the Holy Ghost inform'd him by Vision; he doubted about Circumcision, a General Council decided the Controversie; the Council forbad eating meats offered to Idols, St. Paul allow'd it; and in one place St. Paul is so modest, as to confess, that what he writes, 'tis true, he cannot warrant altogether as from God, but that he believes it truth, and that he has the Spirit of God, *Acts 10. 1. 1 Cor. 7. 40. Gal. 2.*

But yet, as from hence, may be concluded, that God made it not his good will to have every thing in Scripture infallible ; yet does it not appear, but that necessary truths he has taken care to have secur'd ; but as to those too, we are to be careful in our search ; we must allow the Apostles to be Men, like our selves, we must grant them to have Transports, Passions, Figures, Allegories ; and it must be our care must clear the Truth from those, as *John 21. 25.*

To conclude, I cannot forbear to reflect on that Maze, that common and weak disguise of Scripture-Interpretation, to wit, that because we cannot Reason out the Obscurities, the Secrets of God, therefore we cannot understand, and reason on matters of Practice, and Duty, the Revelations, dark Prophecies, and Secrets, belong unto the Lord, *Dent. 29. 29.* But Commands, matters of Duty and Practice, are to be search'd by us, examin'd by us, our selves, even our own Judgments and Reasons, at our perils, and by their Justice, we are to value the Revelation accordingly.

PART

PART II. CAP. I.

Motives to Piety. SECT. I.

HAVING in my former part premised what may be necessary to instruct us in the Choice of our Religion, I now in this Second Part descend to display what Motives we have to engage us to Piety, to perswade Men that they do not make Religion purely speculative; that they do not answer for burying their Talents, but cherish their Knowledge up to an agreeable and constant Practice.

1. *Creaturely Obligation.* SECT. 2.

There is a Natural and Necessary Obligation on every Creature to answer to God the end of his Creation; now, as Man alone has a Rational Soul capable of Divine Worship and Contemplation, so cannot he suppose himself endued with such Powers for nothing; Men do not dress themselves in Scarlet, and Robes, to feed Hogs, and Plough Land only; and 'twere Blasphemy against God the Fountain of Reason, to think he should be bountiful of such Abilities to us, only to manage a little mean and unnecessary worldly pelf with.

Let any Man consider from the Heavenly Motions, from the Starry and daily Influences, let him watch in a clear Night their wonderful, various, and yet most orderly Courses, and let him see how God Waters the Earth like a Garden; then let him reflect whether he does not see an All-Provident and Fatherly supream Mind; let him see from the familiar, the ordinary Prophecies by Dreams, whether that Power does not concern himself below; if so, what black Ingratitude are we guilty of, if we do not pay that God the little Tribute of our Worship?

To conclude, was it not a shameful Misfortune that turn'd Nebuchadnezzar from Man to a Beast? And do not Men bring that Curse on themselves, when by omitting the worshipping and glorifying their Creator, they neglect all the Goodness, Excellency, indeed the very End of their Nature; and turn from a fruitful Vine, to an unpleasant Thistle.

SECT. II.

Christian Profession.

IF a Man had not Reason or Reflection enough to dive into his Natural Obligation to Piety, yet if he were not absolutely insensible, barbarous, he could not slight his Christian Profession, his Vows in Baptism, Communion, Repentances, if he had the least Veracity or Truth, surely he would not be false to those Obligations, tho' possibly he might be ignorant of the complete Reasonableness and Necessity of his Religion.

Think with thy self, dear Brother, if thou art a Christian, and reflect and see how thou shalt be able to bear future Judgment, what Account, do it think, twill appear to the great Judge? So much time spent in Eating, Drinking, Voluptuousness: So much time spent in Worldly Care, which ought to be call altogether on God, and scarce two Minutes in the Day spent on our greatest End, our main Business, the Glory and Honour of God.

Surely hadst thou three Grains of pious Gratitude, hadst thou the least bravery of Spirit, thou couldst not neglect so considerable a Duty; what if there were neither Heaven nor Hell? Suppose thou diedst like a brute, wouldst not thou be ashamed to receive thy Being and Substance from God, and not thank him for it? Wouldst thou not be sham'd to receive a Revelation from him, were it only how to live happily in this Life, and not acknowledge it? What shall I say? Man degenerates,

nerates, loses the Reason God has given him; like a Hog, he eats the Acorns, and never looks up to the Tree that bears them; poor gross-sighted Creature, he can break into Raptures for a kind look from his unconstant fellow-Creature, a Mistress, but cannot see his Great, his Original, and his All-disposing Creator and Benefactor; he can see the Tool that works, but not the Hand that makes it.

C A P. III.

Punishment, Hell, &c.

BUT if thou hast lost all Ingenuity, all sense of Gratitude, if nothing but servile means, the Whip and the Rod, can move thee to thy Duty, poor little Creature, consider God's Vengeance on Irreligion; reflect on Noah's Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Destruction of Jerusalem: But if thou think these Temporal Evils distributed confusedly on good and bad alike, reflect a little higher on Eternal.

Think, dear Friend, of a Place prepared for the Devil and his Angels, *Mat. 25. 41.* God's worst and most inveterate Enemies, *a bottomless Lake or Pit of fire and brimstone, Rev. 20, 3. 21, 8.* The very blackness of darkness, *Jude, v. 17.* Think thy self there bound hand and foot, *Mat. 22. 13.* hearing nothing but *weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth*; think, I say, of such a fire never to be quenched, wherein shall be no rest night nor day, *Mark 9. 44. Rev. 14. 10, 11.* Surely if thou hast a grain of Christian Faith, if thou art not quite sear'd by Infidelity or Impenitency, thou canst not but tremble at such an infinity, such an horrible and endless Misery, *Mat. 25. ult.*

But suppose, my Friend, that thou canst satisfy thy self by Reasoning, that Eternal Punishment is not suitable or adequate to a Temporary Offence. Suppose, upon this account, thou apprehendest the Apostles have

mag-

magnified their Hell, as a Terror to the grosser Reprobates, yet if thou followest Natural Religion, if thou pursuett thy Reasoning, how little will it be better for thee? Thou art mad, if believing the Immortality of the Soul, which, if thou canst believe any thing, I have proved to thee; thou art absurdly mad, if thou canst imagine God sets us in a state of tryal of Good and Evil here to no purpose. Dost think he has any Justice, which were to BlaspHEME him to a Stock, to deny he has, if he has a Temporary Offence, will at least deserve an equal Punishment, and after that, suppose he let us wander amongst Devils at Random, were not that Hell enough, not to see God or his Saints, but to have such horrible Company? And what but this at least can be the intent of our state of Good and Evil, to see who shall be fit to inhabit in God's Court, and who not?

To conclude, suppose God all good Nature, all Mercy; suppose he let all promiscuously into Heavenly Bliss, he must new model and frame their Souls too: How will the Murtherer and murdered, how can the Lamb and the Wolf agree, the stubborn and the gentle be reconciled? Indeed, if God lets our Souls continue with the impression they gain, which in Justice we cannot but suppose, the Voluptuous Man needs no Hell to afflict him, the very carking habits and impressions of his Soul are sufficient, the very Vices he has contracted will be Furies to torment him; nay, they will become as Natural and lasting as Pride in *Lucifer*; and tho' they are weakness and folly, yet his Reason will never be able to root them out.

CAP. IV.

Death.

BUT Men are apt to flatter themselves, and tho' they believe Hell and Judgment, yet they put them at a distance, and therefore Death is a most excellent Christian Motive to Piety. Consider, nothing is more certain in its event, for our Tryals here must end, nor nothing more uncertain as to the time; 'tis to our Perils, if we are caught unready: And indeed, what is Life, but a continual warfare with Death? We eat, that we may not dye for Hunger, and drink, that we may not perish for Thirst.

The Devil hath not a worse Temptation, than to make us senseless and brutishly thoughtless of Death; they are his Stratagems, that make Men fancy Death less terrible, because they think it at distance, and carelessly, and sleepily are never concern'd at the many Accidents carry Men off, even from their own Families at instants: Had they *Hezekiah's* Message, they would not be so thoughtless of their danger, tho' at fifteen years end, when perhaps they have not a quarter of the time to live. But suppose Providence were bountiful, in allowing them forty or fifty years more, were not that time little enough for us to prepare our selves for an infinite Eternity?

But further, to shew the uncertainties and surprizes of Death, think how many are thoughtlessly hurried out of the World by Massacres, Battels, Insurrections, Stabbings, Plagues, sudden Invasions; think how uncertain the Crisis of known Diseases are, but above all, how easily and suddenly the brittle Machine of Man's Body is fatally and instantly ruined by Madness, sudden Deaths, Appoplexies, &c. So that indeed there is not one in ten that has a timely, a certain and sure Conviction of his Death, but all almost defer it, and expect it still at distance, till they dye in the deceit.

To

To conclude, how can I sufficiently upbraid this procraftinating Madneſs, this doting Lethargy? How can I ſufficiently admoniſh Men of the danger and folly of it? Indeed, 'tis to Preach to the Wind, to fight with the Air, to ſpeak to Men of no Fore-ſight or Prudence. What ſhall I call ſuch Men? Brutes, they deſerve not ſo good a Name: Do they pretend Rationality? What are they the better for that, but rather the worſe, if they do not uſe it? Even the Hogs will leave the open Fields, and fly for ſhelter when they perceive the Storm coming; but Man, block-head Man, ſenſeleſs Man, ſtands giddily on the brink of Hell every moment, and yet is inſenſible.

C A P. V.

Heaven, Divine Happineſs.

BUT on the other ſide, to encourage Piety, had not God a mind to purifie to himſelf a ſecond ſet of Courtiers, as it were, to ſupply his loſs by the fallen Angels, what need had he to make himſelf this Nurſery of Souls, to place us here, as it were, Mask'd, and under the Veil of Fleſh and Blood, the World, and Temptations, to try us? Nay indeed, had we no Revelation, 'twere Blaſphemy to think God made us in wantonneſs; we muſt needs Idea an Heaven for the good and juſt of this World.

To aſſure us of the Perfection of ſuch Heaven and Heavenly Joys, we need but conſider that 'tis not but reaſonable that he that endued and made us with inclinations, can make and give them ſatisfactory Objects, that he that made the Eye, could create Colours; ſo that we are weak, to doubt the ſufficiency of our Joy; beſides, ſince God has promiſed us, be ſure, as he is well able to compleat us with ſuch an agreeable and laſting Happineſs, he neither will nor can deceive us.

'Tis

'Tis little to describe the Blessings, the Peace and Calms that the Just enjoy upon Earth, those are but Toys to what we ought to estimate Heavenly Joys; our Bodies, our Senses are too gross, our Apprehensions, our Intellects are too weak, too dull for such exquisite, such refined relishes; these Joys are to answer to the greatest Rewards of Goodness, to the Merits and Sufferings of Christ for us, to counterpoise the dreadful Justice of God in Hell, indeed these are the very Joys prepar'd for Christ himself, *Mat. 25. 21. Rom. 8. 17. 2 Tim. 2. 12. Rev. 22. 3. John 14. 3. 1 Peter 1. 4.* To see God Personally; *1 Cor. 13. 12.*

To conclude, Heaven is as a City endow'd with Happiness without alloy, its Pleasures perfection of Knowledge, and the height of Love and Friendship: The Ancients used to cry, *Sit anima mea cum Philosophis*, How much more happily shall we enjoy our selves there then, not only with Philosophers, but among all sorts of the bravest Men, Martyrs, Apostles, and Prophets, and even in the presence of Christ and God himself?

GA. P. VI.

Eternity.

I Would fain perswade Men to judgment enough to understand Eternity; I don't doubt but they know what the word means, but they are as little acquainted with its purport and value, as if they had neither Sense nor Reason.

Eternity is a wonder to conceive, if it were wanting, 'twould sweeten Hell, and embitter Heaven; for as we should be sure both our Pains and Joys would have an end, so our sense would be destroy'd by expectation. Eternity raises our Essence to a kind of Divinity. Eternity is the only solid Crown of all that's good or brave; and had a Man the least grain of true impartial Judgment, Eternity would be a Motive past conception to Piety.

What

What is the common Idea of Eternity, but a meer definition? Who has Faith enough to give himself the least concern about it? How many shall court a Patron, for a next Advowson, a Miser, to be his Heir, tho' in reversion, and on casual expectations, and at the same time sleepily slur over their Inheritance eternal, infinitely more valuable and certain?

What shall I say? Is not this Faith meer damn'd Hypocritise? What Impudence must that Man have, who acknowledging an Eternity, values transitory and invaluable worldly concerns before it? Gross Madnes, worthy of *Bedlam*; shall we court the base with a many years obsequious observance for a little perishable dirt, and not only neglect, but affront the offers of a glorious Eternity from our most gracious God and Creator?

To conclude, we are like little Children, dazzled with gaudy Bawbles, and brutishly insensible of solid Goods. Good God! how shall I sufficiently express this horrible Folly and Madnes? Let, I beseech thee, thy Divine Grace express with Holy thoughts what my Pen fails in, and make us to know what is so much our Interest and Dury; indeed, I believe from my Soul, had Men once tasted throughly of Celestial Joys, and meditated on their Eternity, they would be so eager after them, and so little value the World, that the greatest Grace required would be to support them in delay to keep them from self-murther.

C A P. VII.

Presence of God.

I Shall now conclude all my Motives, in remembring the Presence of God; and certainly there cannot be a greater Motive to Piety, and a stronger *Memento* against Wickedness and Vice, than to weigh his certain, but infinite Presence. Thou subtle Quibler, dost thou think

think to cozen God, the Fountain of Wisdom, that gave thee thy seeming Ability? Thou Haughry and Mighty, darcest thou contend with God? Forgettest thou *Nebuchadnezzar*? And thou secret Lercher, dost think to hide from an All-seeing Presence?

We can tremble to misbehave our selves in the Presence of a King; we rather sneak and cringe foolishly, than be wanting in a respect to him. What Madness is it bewitches us, that we so little regard the King of Kings, that we not only not Reverence and Respect his Presence, but impudently and pragmatically break his Sacred Laws in his sight? Why do we so Hypocritically bely our selves and actions, thus to say we believe him? In short, we have no Faith at all, if we allow our selves to do thus.

Great and good God, how blind, and stupidly senseless are we, poor Men, impudently before thy Face proudly in despite of thy Puissance we offend thee, we Blaspheme and Affront thee; and when in Mercy and Pity thou bearest with us, and by Grace and Judgments endeavourest to reconcile us to thee, we scorn thy Admonitions, we curse the Rod and Hand we ought to kiss; and yet thou bearest this too. O Goodness! O Mercy unspeakable! treading as it were upon the heels of Justice.

PART III. CAP. I.

The Practical Method to a Holy Life.

I F A S any thing I have said, any thing thou ever thoughtest, read, or heard, convinc'd thee of the necessary and value of a Holy Life? Enter it down, preserve the Precept, trust it not to slippery Memory, keep it in a readiness to give thee Admonition, to refresh and revive thy Faith. Remember if thou lovest the Reasoning of thy Faith, thy Faith is self weakens and perishes with it, and thou becomest wilfully blind and ignorant.

When thou hast done thus, to compleat a Holy Life, to make it grow up unto Practice, the surest course is, first, to make an absolute and peremptory Resolution, for that will make a Man intent; enquiring, diligent upon it, but yet to resolve soberly, deliberately, not rashly and in haste; to do it after some hours, some days Consideration, and in that while thoroughly weighing all Difficulties, Discouragements, Dangers, and Inconveniences that may attend us in it: Suppose the loss of all things, and Life with them; suppose the disobliging all thy Friends, incurring the sharpest Reproaches, and then try thy Heart and Courage.

When thou hast thus resolved, after several intermissions and deliberations, to avoid all rashness and surprizes, then back all with a Vow, with a Solemn Resolution to awe thee before God; and that it may not slip thy Memory, enter it in writing amongst thy Precepts, and bind thy self at least to a Monthly, if not a Weekly perusal of it.

Secondly, As seasonably as thou canst discover thy Resolution abroad, not only for the encouragement of good Example, but to harden thy self against Reproach,

to repel bold Encroachers and Tempters on the Modesty of thy Resolution ; the greatest ill that can ensue hereon, is the fear of deserv'd Reproach, for not making good that Resolution which thou hast declar'd, and the greater that fear is, the safer and happier thou wilt be, it will be as a Wall, a Bulwark to defend thee against Temptation.

Lastly, To strengthen thee the more, Associate thy self to Men of like Resolutions, desire their Prayers, Conversations, Instructions, and Encouragements to support thee ; and if thou art not so Happy to be acquainted with such, make some of thy Old Acquaintance good. Remember what Joy there was for one Sinner that repented, and think what a grateful Office such a Conversion is both to God and Man.

To conclude, whatever thou dost when thou settest about such a Resolution, beware of Procrastination and delay : Remember how many good Thoughts that Temptation has already stifled in thee ; think how the quick sense of Reasoning palls by being read and neglected, think how God withdraws Grace from those that slight it ; nay, do not think to let Business defer thee, nor only as this will be no real Interruption to thy Business neither, if thou hast Prudence or Fore-sight ; but do not Affront God, to value the World before him, nor thy own Judgment so much, as to value things Temporal before what is Eternal

C A P. II.

Zeal.

'TIS a hard matter to perswade some Extravagants in Religion, that there can be Zeal without Knowledge ; indeed we have the Apostles word for it, or else Religious Fury would never be convinc'd ; 'tis enough to some if there be good Intention, pious Resolution, that's enough to justify all proceedings, Rational or not.

Suppose

Suppose I read or heard Sermons or Prayers so long, as to dull my Apprehension, to impair my Health, or to render me Melancholy; is this nothing? What is it but a degree to Self-murder? But you will say, God will defend them that serve him, right, if they keep in his instituted course of Moderation, but not when they tempt him by wilful and proud Excesses, when they serve rather the Lust and Glory, than the true End, Benefit, and Exercise of Piety.

I am asham'd to think how some Men applaud Passion in Religion, and that not only in word, but practice; nay, our wiser reputed Authors shall run you out whole Volumes in Extraneous, Raptures, abrupt incoherent Sentences, as if they were beside themselves: For my part, I had rather Worship God with one Expression from settled Judgment, and cry, with the Publican, *Lord have mercy upon me a sinner*, than Parrot over violent, long, and disorderly Forms of Prayer, than Romance out my Devotion by Passionate Harangues.

'Tis pretty too to see the Self-beguilers delude themselves, to hear them cry up their feeling Grace, their inward Consolation of Holiness; whereas in truth, their haughty Minds vent their Passions in Zeal, and by that a little levelling and equalling their Tempers, they attribute all the ease and sedateness they receive to Devotion, to some Gift preternatural, exactly conformable to the delusion of some others, who fancy every Whimsie, every Crudity that crosses their thoughts to proceed from the Holy Ghost, from his Sacred dictates and directions.

Incomparable may I say is the Spirit and Temper of the whole Duty of Man, and most of all imitating Sacred Writ, a solid Zeal, a true and hearty Good Will towards the Service of God, and yet not sowr'd by Passion or Violence, but all along rang'd with true Method, Order, and well-deliberated Judgment.

To conclude, an inordinate and passionate Zeal is destructive of its own Ends; Storms are always short, and the very violence of Passion obliterates the impression it would make upon us: The truest Method of Zeal is slow, deliberative, and judicious, that is lasting
and

and strong, breeds a compleat sincerity, and cannot but be most acceptable to the great God of Wisdom and Goodness, who necessarily hates Passion and Flatulency, as the Brats of sickle weakness and indifferency.

C A P. III.

Religion, Practice, general.

AS God is certainly a God of Judgment, so he delights to be serv'd in Judgment; 'tis impossible he should approve of trifling, our passionate Addresses to him are idle; we ought to conform our Lives accordingly, if not, the greater our Address, the greater our Hypocrisie.

Every Action of a truly Religious Man is like as it were a Sermon in practice; he knows and follows exactly the bounds of his Religion, because it is his study; and as for his being Superstitious, 'tis impossible; he is sure the All-wise God requires Hearts, not Trifles.

Further, he loves not to Idea out his Duty to a nice impossibility, and then despair in a necessity of breaking it, and rail at himself for it; but he proposes his Duty as it really is, he diminishes not God's Justice by Cruelty in it, nor partially leaves himself wide to Libertinism.

He is griev'd to see his Zeal exceed his Life; he is not at ease till he has drawn all his Actions to a fix'd and steady Rule; 'tis the Property of wicked men to be Superstitious and fannish in Religion, Men who never make it the business and employ of their Judgment.

Further, 'tis a suble Temptation of the Devil, when he finds he cannot seduce us to bare-fac'd ill, to tempt us to excesses in Duties; for as a Man has three branches of his Duty, to God, himself, and his Neighbour; so must he do every one of them so, as not to neglect the other.

The Scriptures that Command us to serve God with all our Hearts, say likewise, that we should love our

Neighbour; that he that will not work, let him not eat. And though 'tis true, some Prophets have lived reverently, yet 'tis Presumption for us to follow them, till we have their special Guide, to wit, the Holy Spirit, in their measure to direct us.

Lastly, tho' as well in the practice as the search of Religion we ought entirely to follow our Judgments and Reason, yet ought we in both cases in all Humility to fling our selves at the Foot-stool of God's Grace, and not to rely on our own Strength, our own Ingenuity, our own Courage, but humbly to beg his gracious Assistance to our too manifest weakness in both.

C A P. IV.

Religion, Practice daily.

SO think, and so do, as if thou wert to dye to Day, and at Night to give an Account of thy whole Life; let the same Prudence direct thee equally in Temporal and Eternal Concerns: Settle and prepare thy Will as it were to meet thine End in both; nay, defer not the least Duty, remember thou art not sure to command Time or Resolution to Morrow; how knowest thou but this Night will be thy last?

Further, as 'tis good to have our thoughts well seasoned in the Morning, as it will be apt Religiously to affect us all the day after, so by no means ought we to neglect Prayers or Meditations then; and as it will be good to examine our selves in the Evening, else our Religion may be apt to degenerate to Formality, so 'tis good, and indeed necessary then by Repentance to revive it.

Excellent was the Method of great *Seneca*; he at his first lying down, before his Rest, examin'd his Breast, censur'd his day's Actions, call'd himself to an Account, says he, *My Soul, if thou do so no more, I forgive thee*: His Wife in the mean time lying by him, and hearing him,

him, tho' knowing his Custom, nor interrupting him. Now, by that means he kept a kind of Diary of his Vertues, Improvements, and not of every bawbling Action, that deserv'd rather Oblivion than Recollection.

To conclude, as to Business, remember we may serve God in every Action we do, how heartily may we Appeal to him in every thing by Ejaculations; for instance, *Thou, O Lord, hast curs'd the Earth, that we cannot well subsist without Labour, I am content therefore to follow what thou hast ordain'd towards the common Subsistence of Mankind, I can willingly bear and obey thy Sacred Law; nay, I do all things in love to thee, I regard nothing for my own sake; indeed thou art my great, my only end, my all in all, and that not in word only, but heart also.*

Reflect now, my Friend, what trouble is there in serving God, unless what Superstition creates? Thou seest thou mayst serve him and thy self, seek thy own well-fare in his Obedience; how truly then has Christ said, *My Yoke is easie, and my Burden light*? And is not this enough almost to ravish thee with Religion? Besides, when Religion enjoyns thee to Honesty and Fidelity, what does it seek but thine own Interest too? Undoubtedly those Vertues relish of the greatest Policy; nay, the vilest worldly Atheist, if he had Wisdom or Prudence, would admire them. O the Excellency of Religion! the Riches of Vertue and Piety! Nay, when they enjoyns us Temperance in Pleasures, they over and above Rewards us with the Health, and curiously relish'd Enjoyments they give us.

C A P. V.

Humility.

There is not a greater, a more considerable Vertue in Religion and Morality, than Humility; little proud and bubble Man vaunts himself in haughtiness, neither considers nor understands what he really is, but

Peacock-like boasts himself in weakness, wear appearance and form, and what is not only his deceit, but his ruine, acts, judges, and does every thing in Conformity to this false, this flattering Idea.

But why do I write? Some Men think themselves above Religion; what can no Charm dissolve this bubble Pride, and level it to Reason? Get thee on the Mountains, see Houses, Men, and Palaces like Ants and their Hills below; see how tottering the very Thrones of Princes are, their only Security a doubting and too often erring Conscience in their People.

Degrade, poor frothy Creature, see how the great God of the World levels thy empty Vanity; hast thou Crowns, and Empire? Thy Death, which hangs on Providence, hurries thee to equal Lots with Beggars; thou hast many Talents, and thou hast many Temptations too; beware thou behave thee well, for thou must dye, and turn to Dust, and if thou hast not done well, be hurried in *Mobile* Confusion to Hell, to Eternal Darkness; Salvation allows no Prerogatives, no, not to Princes.

What Pourtraiture does the Rapacious Souldier, the Luxurious Courtier, and Haughty Tyrant see of themselves? Nothing but a proud and haughty Mind, and a gay and delighted Body. Blind wretches, Humility would show them wicked and miserable Miscreants, ripe and ready for the Judgments of an angry Creator, and at that instant trespassing on his Mercy.

Thou art Victorious over others, consider thou art but God's Scourge for their faults; think how soon the Scene may change: Thou hast great Knowledge and Parts, what does it advantage thee? All's imperfect, thy Wisdom is but like the groping of the blind from thought to thought, it cannot save thee from Death, and then at best thy Knowledge will seem but laborious Ignorance to thee.

Nay, hast thou Wisdom and Knowledge, live and act well, or thou wilt find thy self the greater Devil. Hast thou Power and Authority? If thou abuse it, there's a just Judge Records thine Actions, and will thoroughly avenge the Cause of the distressed. Stupid and senseless

less Man, because God in Mercy Reprieves thy Sentence; ungratefully thou slightest his Judgments; runte from thy Lechary, know thy self right, and by Repentance anticipate thy dreadful and eminent Doom, if not thy degrading and ruine even in this World.

C A P. VI.

Self-Denyal

SELF-denyal is a Duty of that Excellency, that a Man cannot be truly Good, Pious, or Virtuous without it. Self-denyal is that bravery, that cleanness of Spirit, that enables Men perfectly to pursue their end, whereas little sinister biases of Interest run them into a thousand Intricacies and Mazes; tis for this our Saviour bids us be Converted, and become as little Children, or otherwise those corrupt Affections which would have been renounc'd at first setting out, are like a thick Cloud upon the Eyes of their Minds, not suffering them to discern those Truths, which to Men enlighten'd are clear as the Sun at Noon-day.

We have an extraordinary Example of Christ in this Duty, who, tho' he were God and Lord of all, yet for our Instruction, became poor and servile; and tho' he were a King, refused Attendance and Splendour; we may see the want of it in the Young Man that came to Christ, but would not sell his Possessions: Indeed now we cannot propose a Duty like what we could then, by serving him with a rambling and reaching Poverty, but if it should be necessary that Duty would engage us now as well as the Young Man then.

However at this instant Self-denyal ought to make those that are great Possessors, as if they possessed not; they ought to esteem themselves only as God's Stewards, first, to feed themselves, and next, for Charity, others; those that value their Lives to preserve them, where consistent with Piety and Verrue, otherwise to be ambi-

ous and desirous to leave them: this is that great Regeneration preach'd so much by Christ to *Nicodemus*. Further, this Self-denial is of so excellent use to us, that it dispels little perplexities, it sets a limit to our Resolutions, and creates an happiness steady and even like the Saints in Heaven; and is so beneficial to us, that it ought in highest Prudence to be encouraged. Now, the best Method to do that, is to meditate on it, practice it, and by little Experiments to harden our selves to a degree of Courage in it.

A Second Benefit and Method toward this Self-denial, is to Dedicate our selves, and all we possess, to God; this is the surest Monitor, the surest Director towards a free Dedication to Religion and Vertue; and this we ought to do, not only as we are all of Natural Right God's, but as we are his by Redemption, and as our very Christian Faith makes us (unless we are Reprobates) Professors of this Duty.

To conclude, he is well instructed in this Duty, who is thankful in the midst of Afflictions, whom nothing pleases but God, who when he has lost his Comfort, loses nothing of his Duty, but is still the same when God changes his Face towards him; and a Man may sufficiently see the misery in the want of this Duty, in the maintaining the several Sects and Factions in Religion: see how proudly Men admire their own, all are in the right; and none make any steps towards a Charitable Compliance; but rather choose to see the World in flames, than bear with one another.

CAP. VII.

Charity.

By this shall you know that you are my Disciples, that you love one another.

I give unto you a new Commandment, that you love one another.

Charity is a larger Duty than assisting Beggars; Charity in Divinity is like Good Nature in Morality; to be shewn upon every Opportunity of our being able, to assist our Neighbour, whether Rich or Poor, whether in their Good Name, Riches, or otherwise, and whether by Advice or Aid; indeed Charity engages a good Man to his very Enemies; when he receives Injuries, he grieves rather for the Malice of him that injures him, than for his own suffering; when he is perversely unjust, he despairs not, but hopes by time to reclaim him.

Charity puffeth not up, Charity is not contentious, Charity is credulous of good Reports, incredulous of bad, Merciful; Charity is ready to do good, will by no means disoblige, or do ill; in short, Charity duly followed, will bring us to that Golden Rule of our Saviour's, *To do as we would be done unto.*

Charity drives away Envy, Pride, Covetousness, wishes all things in Common: Charity dissipates Revenge, Dissembling, gives drink to the thirsty, harbours the stranger, clothes the naked, and visits the sick and imprison'd, but yet neither of these Actions is Charity, if done rather from tender-heartedness and temper, than love to God and Duty, as St. Paul says, *If I give my body to be burnt, and have not Charity, 'tis nothing.*

But above all the breaches of Charity, our differences of Religion are the greatest; we damn all Sects but our own, we Persecute them like Dogs, as if the Ma-

majority of Men were not fit to live; we hedge in the grace, gifts, and benefits of the Holy Ghost, and inelose what God intends us, even in Common with the Heathen, nay, if we have any other Charity, we reserve it within the compass of our narrow Minds, to our little Parties and Comrades, as if God only design'd the thousandth part of the Creation capable of Salvation, as if our Brethren were intended as Vermin to be destroy'd.

As for Charity in glorious Gifts and Foundations, 'tis like Sacrifice without Salt, but the painted Sepulchre of Alms, which soon will putrefie and corrupt inwardly; such Charity indeed, like others, hath good intention, but too frequently advance Vice more than Vertue, Thieving and Cheating more than Religion: Indeed 'twere not amiss, if all Colledges and Publick Hospitals were the immediate Care of the Government, under a perpetual censure and account, and not made Nests for Drones and Cheats to be nourished in.

Would you build an Hospital with your share of Charity? Pray, why cannot you trust your Heirs in bestowing it as well as corrupt and Indigent Hospitaliers? Why cannot you erect convenient Houses, for your poor, decrepid, and decayed Husband-men and Work-men? And why cannot you provide for the publick Entertainment of poor Strangers and distressed Travellers? And so by Example, and Principles, and Precepts, induce your Heir to be an Alms-giver.

As for the quantity of your Charity, never bestow so much, as to impair your main Estate; remember you are to be always doing good, and you had better trust your self in your Charity, than others, by giving it all away at a glut. Further, let not your too great Charity render you incapable of living like others; the Countenance of great Charitable Men is not only the best Example, but often more powerful and beneficial than the Alms its self.

But yet defer not Charities till Death, for certainly, if a Man weigh it rightly, he that doth so, is rather Liberal of another man's, than his own; besides that, the Excellency of Charity is in the due application of it to men's Necessities; to give therefore Charity so imprudently,

dently, is to make an impertinent gift of Bounty, at best, may be a means to debauch and make Idle the Poor (whom he would relieve) by its unreasonableness.

To conclude, give not at all, or but very little to Common Beggars, for as it becomes a Trade of Idleness, so it deserves not encouragement; if you have to bestow, seek to your nearest Neighbours, acquaint your self with their real Necessities, 'tis your particular Duty to relieve them; as for others, trust God's Providence, they are too many for your Care; and remember this, 'tis greater Charity to Employ poor Men to get Money under you, than to give them; the latter at best relieves but their present Necessities, the former not only does so, but puts them in a way to provide for themselves for the future.

C A P. VIII.

Prayer.

THE most rational and consequently the best Worship that can be paid to God, is Prayer; now, Prayer is an Humble Address to beg a Favour of God, an Act not to be offered at by an Enemy, but a Courtier, a Favourite, a Lover, a Friend, therefore that Man is inconsiderate and foolish that Prays without Repentance, either with impure Hands, or Malice in his Heart.

As to the matter of our Prayers, 'tis good to observe Order and Method, not that we are to think of being able to Pray perfectly, but in respect to God, who hates Confusion; 'tis certain we cannot contrive how to Pray for all things in particular necessary, and 'tis as certain that in long and particular Prayers we are very likely to Pray for Curses as well as Blessings; and therefore we are to esteem our Prayers a Respect, a Duty, not as a Limit or Bound to what we Petition.

Further,

Further, God is good, nothing can come from him that is otherwise, therefore 'tis Mockery to Pray to him for Evil; and therefore too in consideration of the weakness of our Understandings, we should learn modestly to conclude with our Saviour, *Thy Will be done*, and not be too peremptory in the Petitions we make.

So likewise our Saviour, both by his Examples and Precepts shews us, that 'tis not the length of Prayers prevails, but their sincerity; and undoubtedly it cannot be our great Words or Passions can please God, for they are light as Vanity, but an humble Confidence in him in the sincerity of our Reason and Judgment.

To conclude, as to the prevalency of Prayers, remember what Efficacy there is in Importunity, and yet remember too that thou must not expect always an Answer conformable to thy desires; sometimes God respites our Petitions, to try our Faith; and sometimes again he denies us what we ask, because he knows 'twill be mischievous to us. In all cases therefore we must prepare our selves to submit to the Will of God.

P A R T IV. C A P. I.

Wickedness general.

TIS the popular Plea, Plot, and Decoy of wicked Men, to suggest and fancy all Witty, all Wise, and Shrewd Men on their Party, as if none but Fools were Honest, and Eunuchs Chaste; but to confute them, the best way is to appeal to their private, their retired Thoughts and Recollections, that the poor giddy Fools are perpetually check'd, distracted, and at last plunged by their stified Reasons into a perpetual Despair.

'Tis true, wicked Men seem shrew'd, because they use all means in Actions, right or wrong, good or evil, whilst the Vertuous are limited in their measures, confine themselves to one side only: Thus the Murderer is shrew'd in Revenge, whilst the Mild and Religious forgives Offences; thus the perverse Man seems shrew'd in Arguing, the Back-biter and Buffoon seem notable in Reflections, in Wit, and sharpness of Intellect, whilst the Religious Man in Charity hates to speak with bitterness, to bespatter the Innocent, or to Triumph over Men's failings.

Did all the Nation decide their Quarrels by Duels, and give themselves to Idleness, Jollity, and Cheating, where would be Laws? Where were the Industry even necessary to support us from starving? Did all Men allow themselves in Perjury, where could any Man have security for his Life or Estate two Minutes?

What is the Rhetorick of wicked Men's Discourses, but Oaths and Curses, Ornaments that even dread a pious Ear? What their Wisdom, but a base, weak, sinister Cunning? What the Motive that moves them to their course, but a Cowardly, sluggish Spirit? They
see

see that Mankind, if they all follow'd them, would be like Beasts of Prey to one another ; nay, that the Earth cannot bear and support us without Laws for Industry, and yet they sneakily mind not those common goods, which themselves subsist by.

Were all Adulterers, who would take care in Educating Children ? How could Men be so peaceably knit up in Families ? Were all Drunkards, who should support and reconcile our giddy Disorders ? What, we love that others observe Orders and Laws, that we may have the satisfaction of interrupting them : horrible Impiety ! We Act the Devil's part, we are not content to be ill our selves, but we cannot bear with what is good ; we tempt against it, disorder it, and as much as our abilities will let us, destroy it.

To conclude, let us call to mind the Advice of the Psalmist, *Fret not thy self because of one ungodly*, but remember their miserable ends, and thou wilt rather pity them ; do but observe, and thou shalt see how they proceed from one degree of Vice to another, till at last Humane Laws lay hold of them ; but if not, they dye ripe for a dreadful and horrible Judgment ; and what though they injure or let thee a little upon Earth, thou needest not doubt satisfaction from the Holy and Just One in Heaven, to whom be all Honour and Glory, World without end. *Amen.*

C A P. II.

Conscience.

Conscience in Divinity is like Resentment in Morality ; the Result, Conviction, and Impulse issuing from Reasoning, in good performances chearing and pleasing us in the reflection, in bad, reproving and condemning us ; 'tis in this reflection that the Holy Ghost gives us his Assistance and Promptings.

But

But tho' that Conscience by this means is a most admirable Guide, a Monitor that we ought highly to esteem of, yet when we obey her, we ought to know her, to discern her, the great Impostor, like an Angel of Light, often lurks in her Dress: Men Rebel, Murder, Blaspheme, and Act every thing that is Ill, under colour of her Protection; whereas nothing can be a true Obligation of Conscience that does not agree with perfect Reason, and sound Judgment, as well as with Fidelity, and seeming Revelation.

What a frightful thing an Enthusiastick Conscience is! and how ridiculous a Superstitious one! How cruel and dreadful is the Conscience of *Rome*, built on all the Subtilties of Priest-craft, the irreligious Policy of several Ages growth? In short, Conscience, like the Camellion, changes her colour with the Air and Faction she lives in; and I know not how, unless by a particular Providence of God, she can be reduc'd again to her steady and sure hue of right Reason and Wisdom.

C A P. III.

Sin, Original.

AS for Original Sin, I conceive it little consistent with God's Justice, that we should suffer for our Fathers sin, that his Disobedience might alter our Covenant, from a single Obedience, to the more mean one of the large Law of Nature; that I conceive probable enough, and that Christ came to assure us of this; and further, that God in pursuance hereof suffers us to dye, our Bodies to corrupt, and our Inclinations with them; but he has declar'd, that he will not punish the Children for the Fathers. So that had not Christ died to destroy the works of the Devil, to purchase a new Covenant on *Adam's* Forfeiture of the old, 'twere impossible we could have been born: *Adam's* Offence had fragnared his fruitfulness, and the Generation of Man, must needs have ended with his Covenant.

Further,

Further, when we consider that our Lives are in a continual Spiritual Warfare, and that Grace and Sin make their Conquests but gradually upon us, pursuant to the large and various extent of the Law of Nature, we cannot but conclude that the greatest sin must be an Apostacy, a total defection and corrupt Resolution, which is indeed that Rebellion like the sin of Witchcraft; and that this is the sin of the Holy Ghost too, is most evident, since as God is most just, he will not, cannot make a sin by fancy so hainous, but by highest Wisdom and Justice.

Further, the Reason of the sin illustrates this more plainly; when Christ inform'd us of it, there was no body blasphem'd the Holy Ghost personally, but only his Evidence by Christ's Miracles to convince them in their Consciences; if the sin had been intended of Personal Blasphemy, Christ would rather have spoken of the Father, for few knew who the Holy Ghost was, but all knew that they ought to Reverence the Father; so that indeed the best Idea I can conceive from Christ's words of that sin, is this Blasphemy against the Son of Man, as liable and capable of being on mistakes, shall be forgiven, but Blasphemy against all the strongest Evidences and Convictions of the Holy Ghost in our Conscience, as the Case of the *Jews* was, shews so compleat an Apostacy, so total a Defection, and so corrupt a Resolution, that as thereby a Man shews his absolute choice of Evil, so is his Spiritual Warfare compleat; all Aid from the Holy Ghost in all possibility stop'd, and consequently no room for Pardon or Mercy left, and therefore the sin never to be forgiven.

But as our Spiritual Warfare is gradual, and there may be many lesser Defections before this general Apostacy, so I shall set out their several degrees, their gradual guilts, and by those direct the Consuance of Men's Consciences.

The first degree is sin against doubting, and that tho' in a doubt in its self erroneous, witness *St. Paul's* Advice about weaker Brethren. The Second, against Knowledge more inveterate. The Third, against Solemn Deliberation, Conscience, and Vows. The Fourth is
sin

fin to a Custom or Habit. The Fifth, a Custom to hardness against Reproofs and Sicknes. The Sixth, a Custom to the love of fin in our selves and others. The Seventh and Last, not the love of one or two sins only, but of all, a total defection, a state irrecoverable I fear. But as for sins of Frailty, Passion, Surprize, or Ignorance, if they are not wilful and allow'd, they are as nothing, they are incidents to Humanity, that body of fin St. Paul would so long be free from.

As for the commonly conceited degrees of sin, that Murther is greater than a Lye, or Blasphemy than Hypocrisie, 'tis meer idleness and delusion; our Saviour tells us plainly, *That he that is guilty of breaking one Law, is guilty of all the Commandments.* 'Tis true indeed, that as God will judge Men by their own Consciences, to those that in Ignorance think so, he will deal with them by their own Measure, but in reality there is no difference between a Lye, Blasphemy, or Sacrilege; for as we cannot hurt God by either, so 'tis the Contempt of God's Command and Presence is the Offence, and that may be as great in a Lye as in Sacrilege, the rest is but Conceit.

'Tis a trick of our subtle Tempter, Satan, because he cannot bring us immediately to a total defection, thus to enervate the force of sin, to perswade us some sins are hainous, some almost innocent, and so to delude us gradually from Corruption to Corruption, till we make light of all. Thus tho' we commit Fornication, if we do no Idolatry, or Adultery, we think our selves Innocent; if we Steal, and do not commit Sacrilege, we think God appeasable, and make as it were Sacrilege only the Crisis of our state and Apostacy. Thus the wretched sinner proceeds, till at last despair confounds his Fallacies, and his self-deceits end in inextricable Confusion.

O the depths, the subtilties of Satan! What might we not fear, had we not infinite Wisdom to search and controul his Wiles? Surely Men have sins of frailty and surprize enough, and not thus to encourage and run themselves into his Snares and Trepans to increase them.

To

To conclude, as to what may be alleged, that some sins are capable of repair, others not: the distinction is idle, there is no Injury, God cannot, and will not repair; indeed to a Worldling sense, a repair of a Man's Life, of a Widow and Orphan state after Murder, seems great, but what is it to a Divine resign'd Mind a due sense of the Providence of God? Indeed Murder is commonly a greater sin in Men than a Lye, because according to their Consciences it implies a greater Depravity, Contradiction, and Rebellion, and has usually more Solemn Consideration, but 'tis the Contempt alone that enhances the Guilt, as appears plainly by the variance of a Lye and Perjury.

Nor is this Error about sins little or inconsiderable, how mean soever it may appear: how many Persons by these unhappy Mistakes have run into despair for sins of Frailty, of Surprise, of Passion, and for invincible Ignorances? And not knowing how to judge of their Salvations, they judge themselves by every trifle that crosses their fancies, and make God Condemn them, as it were, for picking of Straws. I must confess, I know not what to say to those, who of determined Malice resist the known Truth of God, like *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, *Acts* 5. that by premeditated Counsel contemn the Law of God, that I must needs say, I cannot but think the great sin unto death, 1 *John* 5. 16. *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. *Heb.* 10. 26, 27. But for others, 'tis the ordinary promise of the Gospel, that Repentance shall atone for them, and 'twere even sin to doubt it.

C. A. P. IV.

Pervertencies, & scruples.

As it hath pleased God to place us here for Tryal, and for that purpose has given us a Sacred Law, so are there belonging to it two preliminary Guilt, as fatal as even the breach of the Law it self. The First is wilful Ignorance,

Ignorance, when knowing we have a Law, we will not acquaint our selves with it. The Second, when we know and are acquainted with our Law, we will not understand it aright, we will scruple and doubt it, till we bring it to our Lusts; we will by perverseness and crossness destroy the very intent of it, and justifie our own Irregularities by the Interpretation of it.

Now, according to this, our Tryals and Judgments depend on three Crisis's: The first, of wilful Ignorance, the Case of the Heathen, *Rom. 1. 2.* The second, on Perverseness, Scruples, and Doubts, the Cases of *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, and *Saul*. And the last, of Obedience to the Law, the common Case of Christians.

Nor is our Tryal, as to wilful Ignorance and Perverseness, otherwise than in the case of sin, and our Obedience to God's Law; it begins by degrees, Men flatter themselves some Ignorances, some crossnesses are innocent, and so long as they observe what they think main Truths, all is well; as for the rest, they think light of: Thus by degrees the Devil abates all sense in us, till at last we become quite Reprobate, perfectly Apostate, and perversely arrive at the *Jews* extream Blasphemy and wilful Ignorance against the utmost Evidence of the Holy Ghost by Christ; rather than believe him, we will attribute his pious Miracles and Intentions, how inconsistently soever, to the Devil himself.

What but Perverseness makes the sin of Heresie! So horrible a Guilt one would think sufficiently branded in *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, so much, that one can hardly excuse some Sectaries of pertinacious Madness for their stubborn Divisions, but let them rest in their Lethargy, I am sure the last Trumpet will rouse them.

But if Men are inclin'd to amend, the best way to avoid this Guilt of Perverseness, is, to let their Minds be Passive, Indifferent, not believe even an Angel, if he speak not convincing and reasonably, and to obey even an evil Spirit, if he should truly convince us of our Duty; to love nothing like Truth, and to seek nothing in comparison of it, to congratulate every Tongue and Pen that gives us intelligence of it.

Nay, not only this in matters serious, but in our lightest, our frivolouſest Converſations, the leaſt Perverſeneſs infects us, if it does not taint us, and if you once break the Sacred Chain of Truth, you begin to err, and her Clue is loſt for ever.

To conclude, under Perverſeneſs likewise may be very well rang'd Drolling, Ridiculing, and Fleering to reſiſt the Truth we cannot gain-ſay; ſo likewise Cavil-ling, Wrangling excuſes the vain Philoſophy, St. Paul ſo much ſpeaks of, the Wiſdom, or rather Craft of this World, when Men having once ſtubbornly fix'd themſelves to Principles, they wyer-draw all Truths to the proportion of their Idea's, their ill-fram'd Notions, and Argue rather how to defend their Cauſe, than for the truth of it.

C A P. V.

Wilful Ignorance.

IT is not enough to ſlur over our Duties by a careleſs Security, for ſince God has fix'd our Duties in our Hearts, bound us up at leaſt by Natural Religion, we are oblig'd as Creatures to examine our Duty, and to Act in Conformity and Obedience to it, as the great end of our Creation; nay, if we examine aright, ſtubborn Ignorance is like ſtanding mute, is equal to wilful Guilt, and ſhews an equal depravity in the Will.

But yet remember too a good Man may offend a Law, and not ſin againſt it; I offend a Law, when I break it; but I only ſin againſt a Law, when I either offend it knowingly, or in a wilful Ignorance, for by Chriſt's own words, *If we be blind, we can have no ſin*: Now, what ſearch is ſufficient to excuſe us of wilful Ignorance is eaſie and evident; I muſt ſet apart ſome time, to ſearch the Law, I muſt ſearch it impartially, with all my Heart; but I am not bound to omit other Duties, by giving my ſelf too much to this ſearch.

Nay

Nay further, I have no Obligation upon me to search Secrets, nothing but my Practical Duty, *Deut. 29. 29.* The Prophecies of *Daniel* and the *Revelations*, by their various Interpretations plainly declare the Necessity as well as Prudence of this Command; those with other places require us to have the Key of God's Holy Spirit, as well as meer Fancy and Judgment to Interpret them.

Further, by this we ought to learn, that in the Practice of Religion we ought not to make our Duty a *Chymera*, an unpracticable Bug-bear, and yet we ought not to have so loose a Rein, as to encourage Libertinism; we ought to lay it as a general Maxim, That there can be no Sin where there is no Law, except in the case of wilful Ignorance and Perverseness; and no Man is guilty of wilful Ignorance and Perverseness, where he has always had a desire, study, and inclination to inform himself of his Duty, *Rom. 1. 2.*

C A P. VI.

Vows, Oaths.

I*llicitum vovens vovendo destruit votum*, in which case it avails not whether the thing vow'd be a greater or lesser Evil, since no Vow can oblige a Man to what is really Evil; 'tis as unlawful to tell a Lye to fulfil an Oath, as 'tis to Murther a Man; and as it's impossible that God should love to have ill done, so is it impossible that he should engage us to it, purely because we have vow'd or promis'd it, since the Nature of good and evil still remains, notwithstanding the influence of any Vow, Oath, or Promise whatever, and is in the Eye of God and Reason only Obligatory. And thus it happens that the Vows of a Servant, or Wife, may be good in part, and void in part, as consistent with their prior Duty and Obligation.

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Further,

Further, that the Superstitious Notions of Vows and Oaths has been wrong, ought not therefore to make us follow them; 'tis true, in the Reformation we ought to preserve Piety; and not contemn what is Sacred, and yet we ought to examine so sincerely too, as not to leave our selves partial blind and confus'd in the matter, to follow *Mosaical* Ceremony.

What, shall a Man not pay his Debts, because he has vow'd he will not? Must a Man starve or murder himself, because he has sworn it? This were for a Man to set up a new Law in opposition to God's Sacred Law of Nature, and by Artifice to subvert the most Holy Will of God. Now, Humanity and Charity are as great Debts as a Bond, and from thence if I Vow not to pull off my Hat to another, even that is void also.

Upon this therefore I conclude, that no Vow can change our state, or bind our liberty, to confine our selves against prospect of good, is an ill, and it is the only power of a Vow to bind us to a known Duty from a known Evil, or in a thing indifferent; nay, if any thing vow'd be indifferent, if the Confinement in the least fret us, to injury to our Body or Mind, it from that instant becomes ill, and ceases to Oblige us, as not indifferent; for from that instant any Vow engage us to a thing the least imprudent, 'tis evil and constantly void.

Further, a Vow may engage me to the greatest Self-denial, so as consistent with my Duty, but not to the least Evil. A Vow to fling away my Wealth into the Sea, is void; but I may Vow all I gain to the Poor, but yet then I must reserve me Maintenance, and bestow it with discretion. So I may bind my self from Wine and Flesh, but if so their want impair my Health, I must use them. So I may bind my self from going into the Country, till my Health, or a better Service from God and my Country require it, but I must never thereby obstruct the advancement of any greater Good, or Talent. So if I Vow to go to *Rome*, if I cannot propose good by my Journey, the imprudence of it makes it void in neglecting my Business. So tho' it were to go but half a Mile, the evil is the same.

So

So likewise to serve a Man's Country in the best Employ he is capable of, is every Man's Fundamental Duty, and to neglect it is to bury our Talents in a Napkin; therefore for any Man to vow such a Vow, as engages him from his best capacity of serving his Country, is of its self unlawful, and *ipso facto* void, as it forbids an apparent Duty, and makes us, as it were, Drones, and useless in the Common-wealth we live in.

To conclude, such breaches of Vows and Oaths, like the Case of *Corban*, are no sin, being of themselves void, but the rash making of them was a sin; so they have not the guilt of wilful and black Perjury, as the World too often and confidently mistakes, but mistaken Resolution: A false Witness is guilty of wilful Contempt to God, and Injustice to Man; but in this case we have nothing more to repent of than this, that we too lightly call'd God to Witness to a Resolution not well weigh'd, consider'd, and understood; if this were a sin, how could the *Jews* leave their Vows to the Law on Christ's Converting them? How can the Husband break his Marriage Vow by a Divorce, for the cause of Adultery, and be guiltless?

C A P. VII.

Promises, Leagues.

THOUGH there be many things may make a Promise void, although confirm'd by an Oath, witness the case of Adultery in Marriage; yet Justice in many cases will bind a Promise stronger than a Vow, because of the expectance and dependance thereon, and its necessity in Commerce and Conversation, and yet little, petty, deliberative Promises to ones self purely, as, I'll go to London to Morrow, I'll buy such an Horse, they have no Obligation at all, but leave the speaker free to discretion, as declaring no compleat settlement of his Resolution.

Further, no Promise can engage me against Self-preservation; 'tis not Lawful for me to lay down my Life to save my Friends, I owe my Life only to God; and yet I may joyn with my Friend even to Death in a good Cause, but then I must Martyr for the Cause of God, and not my Friend. So if I promise to go a Journey, I must not go if there happen a dangerous Tempest at the time to endanger my Person. So if I am a Servant, if I promise what is inconsistent with my Service, 'tis void by means of my prior Engagement.

Further, Leagues, or Promises, tho' not confirm'd with Oaths, ought to be equally Sacred with those that are, as I have said formerly, there is no difference between a Lye and Perjury, but in the Conceit and Formality, the sin is the same in its self; and a Lye may many times have more Guilt, more Contempt, than an impudent Perjury: So I must not equivocate, or strain the words of my Promise, and yet if they are propos'd me knowingly doubtful, I may take them so.

Where therefore we have made Promises, and we have reason to judge them faithful with whom they are made, we ought strictly to observe them; but when they are made with Persons false, either by Practice or Principle, they are *ipso facto* void (tho' confirm'd by Oath) being contrary to the most Sacred Laws of Self-preservation; but yet in such case we offend God by Treachery, indeed black Perjury, by offering to engage our selves where we cannot.

For instance, 'tis impossible to make a League with a Papist, who can not only by Principle swear what he intends not, but disengage himself from Oaths by Equivocations, or otherwise, at pleasure. And as Leagues and Promises are mutual in their Obligation, and are otherwise of no force, so is it impossible there can be Faith oblig'd too with Papists; and if there be any Method to make agreement with them, it must be by Securities and Hostages; Witness the late Persecution by the Duke of Savoy.

So if a Man has been known to be false to his Promises by practice, no mutual Obligation can tye a Man to Fidelity to him, 'tis against the Law of Self-preservation;

vation; and yet if there be no danger of Life, but only of some Temporal damage, and I make a single, not mutual Promise to him, I am engag'd to Fidelity: so if in a mutual Promise the false Person has actually perform'd his part, without he give me a Release, and then I am discharg'd, tho' on Oath.

C A P. VIII.

Repentance, Mortification.

Repentance is a Duty so necessary, so essential to the subsistence of Piety and Vertue, that considering our depravity and decay, without it they are inconsistent and impracticable; 'tis this that rouses us from careless Security, improves our Spiritual Growth, and guards us against the degeneracy of Vice and Sin in our Natures: 'twas the Method of *Seneca* every Night before he slept to search and examine his Actions, and to make a Repentance of what was ill.

Now, to perfect such an Examination and Repentance, 'tis necessary to confess our sins, both as to numbers, kinds, and degrees; and to proceed the more effectually and impartially, to do it with sorrow, to move our Spirits the more; and to resolve on an absolute amendment for the future, as to all Duties, whether Divine or Moral, and to make it proceed so, as to bring forth Fruit.

That Repentance is a most considerable Duty, appears, that it was the first Lesson that Christ our Saviour Preach'd, and that Mortifications advance it is undoubtably true; but on the other side, 'tis a most idle and superstitious wilful Will-worship, to make our Mortifications Tyrannous, or to afflict our selves with any other design than to fortifie and strengthen our selves against our failings.

For instance, I would Fast to subdue my Lusts, Meditate and Read much, to conquer my Sensual Inclina-

tions ; but I will avoid both, when they are not beneficial ; Fasting, when my Body is already weak, and Meditating, when the extream of it has already almost made me Melancholy ; indeed to use Fasting or Meditating then Debauches Christianity, and makes it turn to *Judaism*, and *Mosaical Ceremony*.

C A P. IX.

Judgment of Sinners.

THE weaknesses of men's Minds are as various as those of their Bodies ; but when we reflect on the All-sufficient Grace of God, we are weak to apprehend that he has not an equal Care and Cure for one as another ; we proudly and confidently arrogate to our selves, but from God only comes the power of Action, and he has promised all alike, not to let us be tempted beyond our strength.

You accuse God of giving unequal Courages in bearing Martyrdom : Thou Fool, thou understandest not what thou sayest ; Cowards by Grace have born those Sufferings that the bold and presumptuous have shrunk at : Cannot he that made the Mind, fortifie it ? Cannot he by hidden Causes abate all Reflection of Fear, and suggest excellent Precepts of Resolution ? And what is Pain, when diverted from the Mind ? Be humble therefore, and court, and admire the Assistances and Deliverances of God.

Judge not, lest thou be judged. Every Man is to Answer to his Master for and by himself, besides we are equally rash, and foolish, and uncharitable, to censure others, when we cannot see the motives of their Actions, tho' they be even Atheists ; how can we see where they are perverse, where sinning by frailty, where by contempt, where wilfully ignorant, where invincibly ? So that as 'tis the infinite Mercy of God that judges not Men by his own Idea's or Commands, but by their own

own sense of them, and forgives us our Offences, as we forgive others theirs, we do but thereby only Condemn our selves; and indeed how can we but expect his Sentence then, when we do our selves what we disallow in others?

Thou thinkest hard of those that dye suddenly, that want Preparation, as thousands do in Battels; thou considerest not that those Preparations are for the most part passionate, imperfect; they may be real indeed when a sinner has not been quite Reprobate in his Spiritual Warfare before, but if they are, cannot God easily supply the Misfortune by his Mercy?

The Standard of our Tryal, is our settled love of Good, and hatred of Evil; and as it cannot be thought that our habitual Affections to those can be alter'd in a Minute, so our crying, *Lord, Lord*, will not do; and our death before Preparation, and after, will be just the same thing.

To conclude, 'tis truly worthy to be noted, that when Christ represents the great Day, he does not state our great Examination to be of little Niceties and Speculations, as if Salvation belong'd to none but the Wise, to particular Sects of Religion; as if a Man must know Homoonfios, Transubstantiation, and Purgatory to be sav'd, or believe Predestination, but he tries us by our Charity and Sincerity, whether we have fed and cloath'd the Naked and Hungry, or not, and whether we have call'd on his Name heartily and faithfully.

C A P. X.

Predestination.

THAT God knows all Events, is most undoubtedly certain, 'tis impossible that he that knows most nicely the Composition of all things, should not discern their Effects also, and be able to Prognosticate and Prophecy every thing, that is, as it depends upon him. Shall he that makes a Watch, discern how it will move? And shall not the infinite wise God, by whom all things and powers have their nicest Subsistences, not know their Operations, Changes, Chances, and Abilities?

Further, tho' there be this prescience in God, yet is it with all freedom; not only God were a Lyar to his invitations to Wicked Men, and to make such a mock-tryal here by the Devil for us, but Men were Lyars to themselves, not to discern their free-wills, that their Wills are byas'd by Temptations or Pleasures, is their own fault, and not to be charg'd on God, since if they please they may discern 'tis in their own powers to Remedy them, to cut them off, and avoid them.

What shall I say? Is it possible that God can Create any thing, and not know its Event? 'tis impossible. If so, what must he do? He must either have no Justice, or no Creatures; if he Creates them without tryal, he has no Justice, which were an Imperfection in him, a Blasphemy against him to say, Does his Prescience corrupt his Justice, make him Partial, he can have no Creatures? But that it does not, it cannot, is most certain; he is, and cannot but be just; he has created us, and he must fore-know our Events; however our Tryals are clear, his Justice pure, and our Wills free: So that if we cannot stand his Sentence, 'tis our own fault, and not to be charg'd upon God.

To conclude, dost thou think this fore-knowledge hard? Take care to make thy own Interest in it secure;

Work

*Work out thy Salvation with fear and trembling ; if thou art elected, 'tis to be by thy own choice, through thine own Will, fear not but thou art so too ; if thou seekest to God for it, he has promised Grace, indeed every thing that's good, to them that ask it ; if thou dost not ask, if thou dost not receive, if thou art not elected, God cannot lye, 'tis thine own fault, through thine own Omission ; and now thou art warn'd, beware thou de- not de-
lay till it be too late ; Esau had but once the offer of his Birth-right, and thou knowest not how long God may bear with thee and thy delaying excuses to the Holy Ghost. God has no particu-
lar favour or affection, his Promises are to all alike, to give us Grace, not to let us be tempted beyond our strength, and he cannot lye.*

PART

 PART V. CAP. I.

Reverence of Authority.

WHAT is a more common mistake, than that Reverence follows Authority rather than Dignity of Persons, and yet what is more Erroneous? If we were to be silent in traducing great Men's Errors, so as within the bounds of Justice and Charity we may, how could we make Christ our Example? He could call wicked King *Herod* a Fox, and term the whole, great, and learned Body of *Scribes* and *Pharisees* by the name of Hypocrites.

I must confess from *St. Paul's* recanting his calling the High-Priest a *whited Wall*, in Reverence to his Office, we may learn to avoid all words of pure or meer railing against Authority; but where the Apostles had Justice on their side, how Resolute were they in vindicating Innocence, and accusing Authority? How often did they accuse and asperse the High-Priests and Elders, for being, as it were, the Murderers of that Holy and Just One, Christ Jesus?

To conclude, Reverence belongs only to Goodness, Vertue, and Piety; and Vice, and Irreligiousness destroy it, even in Authority. So, where is the Respect of a Father? When he is wicked, it degenerates from Obedience to Advice. Where is regard for Grey hairs when they are vicious? It is that they deserve no Mercy. In Youth there is some hopes of Amendment. But is thy Father good, his Love is throughly tryed to be relied on, and most valuable. Are Grey hairs vertuous? They are steady, not giddy and changeable, like the efforts of Youth.

C A P. II.

Obedience, general.

WE have three several Judges and Commanders, God, Conscience, and Magistrate; God by Revelation, Conscience by Reason, and Magistrates by Government; yet these three, tho' sometimes contrary, are yet never inconsistent, and are Originally all equally the Laws of God; nor are we to obey or neglect the one more than the other, but all with a meet Reverence in their due and respective places.

As for Revelation, 'tis to be tried by Reason and Natural Religion, and that they duly manag'd, can clash, is impossible. And as to Government, tho' it may oppose both, yet is it consistent with both; Natural Religion enjoyns it to avoid universal Rapine; and Revelation institutes Government as Sacred: And as 'tis impossible that any Government can be perfect, so to avoid the greater mischief Barbarity, if Government degenerate, if it turn not to manifest Tyranny, we ought to acknowledge it by a Submission.

Absolute Obedience, 'tis true, belongs to none but God, the All-wise and upright King and Judge; but since thus he is pleas'd to dispense a degree of this Obedience for our good to his Creatures, we are obliged to consider in what measure and limits we owe it them, that we may render as well *Cæsar* what is *Cæsar's*, as God what is God's.

First, therefore no Slavery can bind a Man to Obedience in what is Evil, we must sooner Martyr; nor can any Contract or Law bind us from the Law of Nature, a just and innocent Self-preservation; for no Government or Contract can make a Prince so Absolute, or a Slavery so great, as to make Men stand like Sheep for the Slaughter causelessly: A Government and Slavery indeed may bind a Man to a general, continual, and entire Servitude, but further it cannot. But

But as to our resistance of Laws in such case, which is far from Rebelling to dethrone the State, we must act by Natural Religion, and Notion of Justice: If the Punishment be adequate, and the Law reasonable in our Offence, as a Tooth for a Tooth, we ought to submit; but if not, we are at liberty to make Resistance, if prudently we may; that is, if with hopes to escape, and not out of Malice to others; for tho' a Law may remit of exact Justice, yet 'tis void if it exceed it; and the Legislative Power is bound to take care they abuse not their Trust.

For instance, if the Law be Death for Murther, the Punishment is just, and I may not resist in Conscience; but if it be Death for Theft, which ought to be punished by a Work-house and Slavery, the Punishment is inadequate; Self-preservation will never let me, nor Natural Justice oblige me to such a Law, and I may resist if I cannot flye for my Life; but I may in no other case resist but for my Life, the Peace of Government must sway me then.

That Christ would not resist in this case, was, that he was accus'd of Blasphemy, made Death, as most hainous, by the peculiar Law of God himself, which he acknowledged then in foree; and so the Law was adequate, and he submitted to a Lawful Authority, tho' in a mistake of his God-head, but that can be no excuse for us wilfully to see our selves butcher'd.

As for Ecclesiastical matters, a Governour commences his Authority where God ends his; he acts Lawfully in executing God's Laws, and in Commanding what God has left indifferent. If the Subject is wrong'd, like *David*, he may flye, but not resist, except for Life; for the Magistrate in Lawful and indifferent things is left the great and sole Judge of Controversie to Obedience, but in all things the Master of Peace and Order.

To conclude, do you think these Conditions of Reverence and Obedience hard? Learn to be content with thy due, if thou art wicked, thou deservest neither; art thou good, thou needest not fear, thou shalt have both, Piety, Vertue, and Sincerity, Command men's Minds, make Men Reverend and Obedient in spite of their
Teeth;

Teeth; to fight against or resist those goods, is to resist God himself; and 'twere these Excellencies made Christ speak like one having Authority, as 'tis said.

C A P. III.

Obedience, Civil.

Kings Command like Gods, tho' they Judge like Men; and we are bound to render to *Cesar* the things that are *Cesar's*, as well as unto God the things that are God's. When they Command unlawfully, we must separate the thing unlawful from the Authority; we must refuse and decline the first, but we must Reverence and not resist the latter; nay, not only so, but we must not by violent Petition, or otherwise, stir up a resistance by others, *Rom. cap. 13. ver. 1. to 7. 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14. &c.*

But yet, as Governments are not all alike, so is this Obedience and Submission, to conform to Government, not Persons: The Apostle's Commands are, *to submit to every Ordinance of man for God's sake*; and therefore I have not the same Obligation in a limited Monarchy as in an absolute one; in the latter I may take all Advantages of the Government, tho' against my Prince, but yet so, as not to disturb his Government; I may contend with him by Law, but if he Oppress me by his Interest, I may not Appeal to Rebellion.

We have an evident Example of this in *St. Paul* himself; did he sheepishly submit to be slaughter'd by the *Jews*, when he could Appeal to *Cesar*? Did he not use the utmost Priviledge of the Law? And was he not bound to it by the Sacred and Supream Law of Self-preservation?

To pretend a *Jure Divino* for an Absolute Monarchy, wherever there is a King, is so barbarous, so false an Absurdity, that it's pains lost to answer it; nay, whoever consults the Scriptures, finds Monarchy not the first Form

Form of Government of God's Institution ; so that the Contract of Man is in reality the only Obligation, and the only Rule of Obedience : And thus *David*, though annointed by God, yet waited the Peoples Choice too, 2 *Sam.* 2. 3.

But yet in such case, as I have said, the Peace of the Government is Sacred, tho' not the Right of the Prince or Governour ; and I may by no means disturb the Government, tho' by Policy and Interest I may lawfully endeavour to defend it ; for should Governments be disturb'd on the demand of every private Resentment, as it is impossible any humane Administration can be without imperfections, so by it should we make the Command of God, of submitting to Higher Powers, of none effect.

As to War, when a Man changes his Allegiance, *David's* Example shews we may lawfully fight against our Natural Prince ; so in case of his Self-preservation, to save his innocent Life, he gathered a Band of Men ; but otherwise while we are under his Protection, we are bound not to Rebel, to endeavour to Murther him, or disturb his Government, but rather, where he is in danger of Life, to defend him, and only defend our selves where himself Assaults us.

In Dispute about Title to Government, every Subject is equally Judge, and is in Conscience bound to set up the truest and justest Proprietor. So in change of Government, no Man is confin'd in Judgment and Choice by another ; indeed the shedding Innocent Blood ought in some cases to Rule us, as in case of a King *de facto*, for then God confirms even Usurpers, 1 *Kings* 14. 14. & 16. 2.

'Tis the Policy of some Governments to conceal and stifle such Truths as these, as destructive to their Project ; but this is but the effect of Weakness, and its consequent, Tyranny, when States had rather have their Subjects Fools and Slaves, than Brave and Wise ; 'tis a pretty Maxim, *That Ignorance draws with the least reluctancy in the Yoke of Obedience, being of so sheepish a Nature, that she is no bodies Foe but her own.*

Besides,

Besides, 'tis a Subject nice and dangerous to limit Civil Obedience, and yet to leave it to obscurity, is to leave men's thoughts in Confusion, to make them rashly barbarous and rebellious without relief; so that such a scrutiny a good Prince cannot dislike, it settles his Throne the stronger; but Tyrants strive to destroy the just opposition of their Power, to root out the due Relief of their Subjects.

C A P. IV.

Prince Deposing, Guardianship.

WHERE Government is grossly abus'd, the Subject is left to the Law of Self-preservation, and the Authority ceaseth; if my Prince Tyrannically Command my Death, I am to look on his Officer as a Murtherer; if he prove a violent Aggressor, I may justly return as violent a Resistance; 'tis true, where the case is doubtful, the Interest of Publick Peace and Order ought to sway us; but the case is different where the Invasion of Liberty and Property is plain and visible.

But you will say, 'tis otherwise where I swear, not to take up Arms against him: No, no Oath can bind me against the Law of Self-preservation, and all Oaths are void when they engage me to an Evil; 'tis the implicate Condition of the Matrimonial Vow, that there be no Adultery; nor can any Promise engage without a mutual Fidelity, and all such Oaths are with a Salvo of our Rights and Liberties; so that indeed the state of Allegiance with or without an Oath, is still the same: By an Oath, 'tis true, one may Test and try men's Consciences and Resolutions, but that is all.

Passive Obedience, and that Kings cannot err, are such weak, such frivolous Allegations, that 'twere even folly to answer them; 'tis true on the other side, killing Kings makes eternal Civil Wars and Treasons, and makes Kingdoms Booties and Preys; but when we

consider that Thrones are sometimes possess'd by Nero's Men, that delight to enflame Cities, Murther, and Ravish for their Diversions, that would destroy Mankind if they could; surely we cannot esteem Men bound by any Law to tolerate such Tyrants, like Sheep to be slaughter'd, but Depose them.

Further, if a Prince goes about notoriously and apparently to subvert the Foundation of his Government, he subverts that by which he himself has Power, and consequently annulling his own Authority, ceases to be King; but yet in such case we must judge like God, as we hope to be judged our selves; we must pretermitt Frailties and Passions in Princes, we must not Judge or Sentence them, till we see them either manifestly perverse, wilfully ignorant, or openly violating our Laws: Remember, if we have no Mercy, we can expect none.

So if a King deserts his People, goes about to enslave or sell them to another, or any other way goes furiously about to destroy them, or make them miserable, the most Monarchical Man surely cannot but grant that such Abuses divest those that are guilty of them of their whole Authority.

So likewise Infancy or Frenzy do most justly put Princes under the Guardianships of others, common Experience testifies that; and if so, surely for a Prince to go about to destroy his Subjects, must forfeit his Authority, and then 'tis too dangerous to trust him a second time, tho' we forgive him. *Salus Populi Suprema Lex.*

To conclude, where ever any Evil or Imperfection in a Prince in humane probability seems removable, there ought to be a Regency or Guardianship; but where it is immovable, likely to be lasting, and of continuance, a Cruelty, either by Principle or Habit, then nothing but an entire Deposing is to be admitted of.

CAP. V.

Change of Government.

Wherein any Government is ill, 'tis the Duty of every body in their Stations to correct it, but not to confound it with a wilful Zeal of violent Alterations, Innovations being as unjust as dangerous; thus the Subject ought not to fly to Revenge, to dethrone the State, nor the Executive Power to dethrone the Legislative, but to let every thing have its due Order, its proper Place; nay, if the Monarchical Line is extinct, 'tis safer to Elect a new one, than to hazard the dangers of Novelty, except the Form of the State be horribly corrupt, intolerable.

Is the proceeding Legal? Submit to little Miscarriages, private Injuries. Does the Officer abuse you? Right your self, in Assaults, by Self-preservation and Defence; in Wrongs, by Appeals to Justice. Does the Judge injure you? Appeal yet higher, or submit, as in discretion.

Is your King Tyrannical, and you near him? Obey him in nothing unlawful out of Flattery; counsel him, persuade him, or leave him. Are his Faults small, doubtful, and few? Bear in Charity, continue with him, and tho' you obey him not, forsake him not. Does he become horribly, barbarously, Tyrannical, Murdering? Either retreat, and conspire for general Safety to secure him, as one at least as bad as a Mad-man, an Idiot.

Further, are your State or Laws Ravish'd by one or many? Do they openly or subtilly, but plainly and notoriously endeavour to Slave you? Resist, the Law of Self-preservation justifies you, and the Conspirators by the Abuse have forfeited their Authority.

Thus whilst Christianity was not rivetted or established in the Government or Contract, Men were bound to suffer, or fly for it; but when time had brought it from a Profession to a Property, Men were no longer

engag'd to stoop to Tyranny and Usurpation, but might relieve themselves by Force, they might not indeed in such case contend for Christianity, but for their Government they might: Thus the Priests drove *Uzziah* out of the Temple, and God personally confirm'd their Action, *2 Chron. 26. 17, 18, 19, 20.*

That an Association in this case is Lawful, was the Opinion of all the Lawyers and Divines, Protestants of the Empire in *Luther's* time; and undoubtedly a Prince who violates Government-Laws, sins as much against *Rom. 13* — as the Subject in Rebellion, and by corrupting the Law, dethrones himself, and reduces all to the Law of Nature.

Government is like a common Contract, the breach of one side implies a discharge to the other; if the Prince destroy the Laws, the Subjects are discharged of their Obedience; for where the Laws are once abolished, all things naturally fall to the Law of Nature, a state of Liberty, Humanity, and Self-defence.

But you will say, where is the Security of Princes then? As to that the Answer is easie, To Depose or Secure them without killing them, is a way too dangerous, too easily to be attempted; as they may be again restor'd by Faction, and enabled to a Revenge; and to kill them, tho' for Murder, is unjust, and so to be resent'd by the succeeding Governour, because they do Trespass on the Trust repos'd in them of Lawful Life and Death, and cannot be justly accus'd of committing Murder.

To conclude, no good or wise Man would venture on such an hazard till he see his Prince horribly Tyrannous, and most popularly Obnoxious, then indeed in Conscience, Honour, and Prudence he is bound to endeavour to dethrone him, else he will be as a partaker of his Tyranny, and guilty of all the Crimes he shall commit, in suffering a Mad-man to Reign. Thus God was angry with *Israel* for bearing with *Manasseh*, *2 Kings 23. 26, 27.*

So for any other State, till it degenerate to a Den of Thieves, till Partiality take the place of Justice, and Rapine the place of Property, we ought to esteem it as
Sacred,

Sacred, to Reverence and Obey it ; but when it ceases to be a Government, and turns to a Butchery and Slavery, there is no Command from God Rules, there's no Government ; and so by a gradualty Governments forsaking Goodness and Justice, lose their Reverence and Authority.

Does any one alledge Presidents of Men Executed without Tryal ? So can I of Robbers on the High-way : But such Custom cannot make the Butchery otherwise than Murther in the King, and Self-murder in the Subject, if he can help it, to suffer it. Even Christ himself whipp'd those that defiled the Temple, our tho' he had no Authority.

C A P. VI.

The Ally, the Neighbour.

AM I a Prince, and does my Neighbour abuse his Subjects ? I am bound to Relieve them, 'tis a Charity owing to our Brother-Government. So, does a great Oppressor supplant or assault my Neighbour ? Tho' I have no League, I am bound to assist him, not only in Self-preservation, but I am bound to put out the Fire in my Neighbour's House, to help his Ox and Ass, much more himself out, when he falls into a Pit.

But how shall we sufficiently express our Gratitude to our present King, that has reliev'd us even against his own Father ? Divine Charity ! that could raise Religion so much in estimate before fond and partial Affection ; 'twas our Saviour's Test to us, *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me* : How greatly then ought we to value our Sovereigns, who have been so singularly eminent in this great Duty, and that so much to our Benefits and Advantages ?

 PART VI. CAP. I.

Persecution.

Persecution in Religion is a Method to make the Holy Ghost personate an Angel of Darkness, a course admirable to fill the Church with Hypocrites, Religious Cowards, and Reprobates, but by no means improving Vertue, Piety, or true Religion : The Apostles strove by their Censures to drive Profane Persons from their Communion, but this new Apostolocism draws none but Reprobates and Hypocrites, and frights all honest Men by nice, devilish, and contentious Tests from their Communion.

'Tis true indeed, Malefactors in Religion ought to be punished, and it is most agreeable to the exactest Laws of Justice they should ; such as make Religion a colour for Immorality, such as Murther, Ravish, turn Traytors, and all on pretence of Conscience, such ought to be destroy'd, with their Mother, the Nest of Wolves, *Rome*, as Common Enemies to Mankind : But pure, innocent, modest, and harmless Scruplers of Conscience, ought to be so far from being punish'd, that they are by the Apostles Advice the proper Objects of our Pity and Charity.

Consider, to Persecute them that modestly endeavour to recommend Truth to us, is to fight against God, to resist his Admonishers, like Tyrants ; we will have what we will have, and we will not be told of our faults, because that we cannot leave them ; and those poor Men, that for their Charity and Courage we ought to thank and cherish, we basely Sacrifice, that they may not calumniate and disturb our Lusts.

Have they Errors ? Consider they are but Men, convince and forgive them ; how are you Christ's Disciples

if you cannot bear with Love and satisfy his little ones? Have they words of Truth? you should be like the *Galatians*, ready to pull out your Eyes to thank them for them: What, must one Error of Frailty obliterate all our good Works besides? O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *how oft hast thou stoned the Prophets, and killed those that are sent unto thee?*

The only thing that can in Reason make you hate them, is, when they are perverse, and cause Divisions; if they are perverse, will not an universal Excommunication be bad enough for them? I mean in the Apostle's sense from Divine Service. Does he cause Divisions? Is he not easily mark'd and branded like a Fire-brand? And is he not easily answer'd and confounded? Can any thing withstand Truth? Are not Singularity and Uncharitableness horrible Guilts to accuse him of?

Further, the Government in such case may lawfully suppress Tumultuous Meetings, but not innocent ones; it may suppress Rebellious Tenets, but not Modest and Peaceable Opinions; it may punish for Religious Offences, but not for Religion; and therefore an Absolute Toleration in Practice is not to be granted, but a freedom from Impositions and Explanations in Charity is necessary; the first were wide to all Extravagancies, the latter injures neither Piety nor the Subject.

Our Saviour's sense of Persecution appears plain enough, by the Parable of Tares and Wheat, which he orders to grow together; and if we consider how the intent of this Life is to be a gradual Tryal and Purification of men's Wills, Persecutors seem purposely to cross the main intention of God in the World, besides as that want of Piety can be no proper Object of Humane Laws.

But as to Religious Malefactors, as Jesuits, &c. undoubtedly in the Eye of God it cannot be Murder to kill them, when they are like to be dangerous Instruments against us, or near to do us mischief; for surely 'tis as Lawful to kill a Robber, a Murderer, a Wolf by Principle, as by Habit, where we are in danger of being injur'd by them.

To conclude, the greatest Charity they can require when they are at lowest, least powerful, is to be banish'd or kept under, lest the Viper being once warm, should turn about to sting us; for since no Oaths will bind them, and they have a Supremacy above all Laws, we cannot indulge them further; it is not consistent with Self-preservation to do it; an Itch or Schism in our Body Politick ought to be only scratch'd with our Pens, but an unsound, gangreen'd, and immoral Member ought to be cut off.

C A P. II.

Church Discipline.

BY the Scripture every several Congregation or Church has these Duties, &c. 1. Prayer. 2. Interpreting Scriptures. 3. Sacraments. 4. Psalms. 5. Censure. 6. Charity. They have likewise the power of Excommunication, *Mat.* 18. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. *1 Cor.* 5. 2. *2 Cor.* 2. 6. And are every Member to be present at their Council-debates, *Acts* 15. Further, they have power within themselves to examine the good behaviour of their Officers.

As for the Power of the Keys in the Apostles, undoubtedly 'twas only Declarative, not Judiciary; 'twas no other than Absolving those that believed in Christ's Doctrine, and leaving others in the state they found them, else to what purpose was it to Preach to them the second time, since they were otherwise irreparably lost; So for Confession, I must Confess and beg Pardon where I Offend, whether God, the Church, or my Brother; but 'twere to corrupt God's Justice, to say, that our Pardon depended on the weak and partial Confession and Absolution of Men.

Further, the Scripture-Discipline is express about Church-Officers. First, as to their Election to be made by the Congregation, and to be recommended to have others

others hands laid on them. Secondly, as to their Duty, Deacons to provide for the Poor, *Acts* 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. *Acts* 1. 15, 21, 23. *1 Tim.* 3. *1 Cor.* 16. *Acts* 5. *Gal.* 6. 10. And as to Bishops, Pastors, or Teachers, which the Scripture, by *1 Tim.* 3. *Acts* 20. 17, 28. treating of Officers, by a silence of distinction imports to be the same, to be the several Rulers, Guides, and Assistants in their respective Congregations, *1 Tim.* 5. 17, 18, 19. *Acts* 1. *Acts* 14. 23. *Eph.* 4. 11. *Rom.* 12. 1, 3. *1 Tim.* 3. *1 Tim.* 4. 14. over which, as *Timothy* in *Ephesus*, one to be chief Bishop or Angel, *Rev.* 2. 1. *Acts* 20. 17, 28. *2 Tim.* 4. 22. *1 Tim.* 3. & *Titus* 1. 5, 6, 7. (See a Pamphlet, called, *The Naked Truth.*)

This may be farther known of these Officers, by *St. John's* Advice to them in severalty in the *Revelations* and *Ezek.* 8. they are intended all to be several and independant, and by *Christ's* Answer to his Disciples, *He that is not against us is for us*, *Luke* 9. 49. 'tis plain any Man may turn Preacher if he please, tho' with respect to Order, it is proper for him as Ruler in a Church, to be elected to his Charge.

As for the Preaching us'd by the Apostles, 'twas by granting a general freedom of speech, kept in due bounds by the Elder, *1 Cor.* 14. especially Verses the 13, 29, 30, 31. but Women were forbid, *v.* 34, 35. *1 Tim.* 2. 12. according to the manner of the *Jews* then in their Synagogues, *Luke* 2. 46, 47. *Luke* 4. 15, 16, 21, 22. *Acts* 8. 4. *Acts* 13. 14, 15, 16. *Acts* 17. 2. *Acts* 18. 24, 25, 26. And that this is to be encouraged, see *1 Thess.* 5. 19, 20.

I must confess, the Pride of present Churches has turn'd this general and more profitable way of Instruction into single Oratory; but I here Prophecy, that if ever any Reformation be of long standing or strength, it must dock this encroachment of Priest-craft, for whilst the Ministry has so over-balancing an Authority, it will never forbear making a Trade on't.

C A P. III.

Church-Unity.

AS the Apostles confin'd not themselves to one particular Method or Discipline in Church-Affairs, St. *Paul* complains, that every Man sought to advance his own, and not to improve another's Foundation ; and there was great difference between the Judaizing and Gentile Christians, even by the Scriptures own shewing ; so their general Bond then was Brotherly Love, Universal Charity, and Catholick Communion, a Duty principally inculcated into all Christians.

Further, the Church of Christ is free to all that believe on him ; and as it is impossible for it to be without weaknesses, so if there is such a thing as an Obligation to Communion, it tyes us to it, notwithstanding any weaknesses whatever, yet still provided Men do not give us particular Tests to deny God or Christ ; for there tho' we need not to forsake Communion, yet however we must not really deny what we think to be the Truth, be it of any kind whatever.

Is it possible that any Church can be without some weak Traditions, or Superstitions ? From Humane Weakness, I say, 'tis possible. If so, as long as any Church or Communion does own and declare they wholly follow the Scriptures and Christ's Revelation, they plainly declare their Errors are but Weakness, and tho' by that we are not bound to joyn with them, or consent in their Errors, yet by that they require our Charity, as fellow-Christians in Communion.

But you will say, some Opinions are so far Erroneous and Heretical, that they bar all Charity, all Communion ; for instance, *Socinianism*. 'Tis true, *Socinianism* is, or may be a gross Error, it denies the Divinity of Christ ; but what then ? If they impose it not on us to believe, or declare so, are not we well enough, our Liberties

berties entire? Could Christ and his Apostles Communicate with the *Jews*, and cannot we with our Brethren Christians the *Socinians*? At worst they make Christ a great Prophet, whereas the *Jews* they branded him as an Impostor, a Chear.

On the other side, *Socinians*, what, can they Communicate with *Arbanasians*, Men they esteem as *Politheists*, surely that they have reason to refuse? No, I say, by no means; the very declaration of the Trinity is, *by Trinity in Unity*. So that if the Trinity be an Error, 'tis in speculation only; and therefore for Humane weakness sake, as it avouches the pure Unity of the God-head, if not impos'd upon us, we ought to tolerate it, and have Charity for its Believers, and Worship with them.

So for Transubstantiation, 'tis a nice and false Speculation, but however not in the least so bad a corruption of the first and second Commandment, as *Corban* was of the fifth. And if so, surely if our Saviour could dispense with *Corban* among the *Jewish* Traditions, well may we with Transubstantiation among the Christians, so long as by Tests we are not forc'd to declare our Assent, Belief, and Worship to it.

Our Saviour, his Apostles, and the Prophets were for healing Sores, not cutting off Limbs in Churches; for tho' these and many other things might grievously offend them, yet were they not for renting and rearing their Mother, the Churches Bowels out; they were for Re-proving, Correcting her, not making Schisms, and forsaking her; and that altho' almost infinite Traditions and Superstitions had perfectly disguised her in Corruptions.

To conclude, I cannot but with grief reflect what a Camel Men swallow, when they can dis-member the Church, encourage Divisions and Schism, and break Brotherly Love and Communion, but strain at a Gnat, a little deformity in the Church, a little scandal of Discipline: What is this but Tything Mint and Cummin, and neglecting the weightier matters of the Law, the pretty knack and trade of crying, *Lo here Christ, and lo there*? The ready Method to make us a Jest, a Scoff, for the Heathen and Atheists to deride at.

C A P. IV.

Church-Uniformity.

I Do not reflect on Uniformity, as a thing offensive to my self, I thank God my Conscience is too strong for it; as therefore 'tis pure Charity that makes me write, so I hope it will make me the more regarded in it by others.

Ceremonial Uniformity then, in my sense, is no other but the Ape, the Counterfeit of Church-Unity, set up like a stately Pageant, to bugbear tender Consciences with; and I cannot but think that if every inferiour Pastor were enabled to make lesser Alterations for the satisfaction of his Flock, that this would rather advance Unity, than confound it, it would stop the mouths of gain-sayers, it would crop the growth of Superstition, and it would Charitably and Christianly indulge tender Minds.

But this Liberty has a further Excellency, it removes all Impositions, even the nicest, in Scripture-terms, the most inveterate Heresies may be reconciled, the worst of Heresies are, when Churches too confident in their Explanations of Doctrines, by avoiding one Error, raise and enforce a worse; and by Uncharitable and Devilish Tests and Article-Subscriptions, keep all Honest Men from their Communion, especially from being Pastors and Teachers; so that by this means, as the Learned Mr. Hales observes, there happens sometimes a Schism on both sides.

What mischief can ensue from hence? Only the loss of a little Worldly Pomp; Ministers may continue in their Holy Functions, have their usual Maintenances and Contributions; but the benefit will be infinite, when Forms, set Words, and nice Explanations and Impositions are once thus confounded, Factions, Heresies, and Irregular Opinions will dye with their Authors, for want of room to be regarded; the Scriptures will be wholly
stuck

struck to, Love and Charity must of necessity flourish, and the very contentiousness of Church-Test-men will be sufficient to brand and confound them.

That the Scriptures favour not this exact Uniformity is plain, their Discipline is quite otherwise; besides, there was never a fairer ground for the Apostles instituting it then, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. But there we see the Apostle thought it better to send Directions, than a Liturgy; Instructions, than a Form.

As for what may be urg'd from the *Lord's Prayer* and the *Psalms*, they had the more peculiar Assistance of the Spirit in their Composition; besides, as to *Psalms*, as all sing together, a Form is necessary; but as to Prayer, the Assembly only say *Amen*. So that the *Lord's Prayer* was but as an Example, to shew the proper length and matter for Prayer, and undoubtedly that Service is weak and superstitious, that deals too much in repetition of it.

C. A. P.

V.

Separate Congregation.

THAT there should be a petty and lesser variety between several Congregations in their Administrations, is no more a breach of Communion, than the using variety of Notes spoils Musick; Discords, Fundamental Differences indeed are fatal, ruinous; but innocent Variety will not only delight the strong, but by a soft compliance indulge and cherish the weak; and in the whole, both instruct all, and preserve Union.

Are any in the Congregation dissatisfied? Let them by the majority decide the Doubt? Are they for Organs, for a Liturgy, for Ceremony? Let them take it by consent. Are some few offended? Let them go to another Congregation near, or let them have liberty by themselves; but then let the stronger remember that they do not condemn their weak Brethren, let them sometimes in Charity condescend to their Communion, to shew that they acknowledge them as Brethren still. Twere

'Twere good for this purpose to have some more publick Church Duties of truly Catholick Communion, to have set times, and most innocent and inoffensive Services, were it only to read the Scriptures, and Reason in the Ancient Apostolique manner upon them; here all Congregations might Assemble, were it like the *Jubilees*, every seventh Sunday; here all might mutually embrace, congratulate, rejoyce, sing *Psalms*, break the Lord's Body without Ceremony together, and joyn at least in Mental Prayer, and True, Christianly, Brotherly Love with one another, if not endeavour towards a more constant Communion.

Further, let there be within a convenient distance a General Assembly instituted to preserve Peace, and indulge tender Consciences, to which let all Men of dependent Congregations resort, if they see fit: Let the Ruler of this Assembly be your General Over-seer or Bishop, like *Timothy*; let him besides have such a constant, standing, charitable Service in the midst of his Congregation, as may be fit for tender Consciences to resort to, in which let the Women be silent, and apart in Galleries, the Youth in the midst, and the Ancients sit or stand round them.

Let every one be obliged to make a proportionable Allowance toward Church-Service, but let him chuse his Congregation if he pleases; if he does not, let the Law make him allow to the General Over-seer, or Bishop; for tho' it be not fit that any Man be persecuted for Religion, yet is it not proper that Men shall reap the Advantage or Benefits of Religion, or Government, and and not be bound toward it.

Let Plurality incapacitate a Pastor or Over-seer for ever; *Covetousness is the root of all evil*: As for the Flock, let every Man look to himself, let every one Worship how, when, and where they please; if they omit Divine Service, give them Charitable Admonitions, and leave them to God. Does he offend? Let Temporal Offences be punished Temporally, and Spiritual ones by the Apostolique Excommunication, not Imprisonment.

Further, let every one at Age of Discretion be suffer'd to speak in the Assemblies; however let Peace and Order

Order be observ'd ; the Spirit of the Prophets is to be subject to the Prophets, and the Ruler in doubts is to manage and call a vote of decision. Is any offended ? Let him here have redress. Is any one griev'd ? Let him come hither and debate for a Relief.

Let the Congregation be like a Parliament, and the Ruler as their Speaker to assist them. Let him be chosen for Charity and Patience. Is any one averse to this Universal Communion ? Let him be your Heretick, brand him publickly for a Divisioner, spare not to set him forth, that he may not misguide the Flock. Is any one notoriously wicked, or immoral ? Let him be reproved and excommunicated, till Repentance in this Assembly, and then let every Sect set their marks on him as a Profligate and Apostate.

St. Austin was a good Example of this Liberty, who by Practice conform'd himself to the Congregation he liv'd in : The Apostles likewise forsook not altogether the Communion of the *Jews*, but sometimes Religiously frequented their Old Temple : To be short, a good Man ties himself to no Party or Faction, but has Charity for all ; indeed he encourages most the innocentest Profession, but his principal endeavours are to preserve entire our Liberty of Conscience, and avoid all Impositions and Explanations whatsoever.

CAP. VI.

Offensive Ceremonies.

TWere to be wish'd that the Offences taken by the World had been rather Practical than Speculative in Religion ; the first would shew a rational and worthy Zeal and Resentment, the latter argues us at best but contentious, and triflers ; if not Schismaticks, raisers of Divisions, and Hereticks.

For instance, Men are angry at Holy-days, dedicating Churches to Saints, at Surplices, Baptizing with the Cross,

Cross, at Lace, pulling off the Hat; it had been a better sign if they had been angry for negligent Church-Service, Discipline, if they had quarrell'd at the insufficient Provision of Churches in *London, Suburbs*, at the misbehaviour of Persons at Divine Service, and the Immorality and Irreligionness of Professors.

If men had such quarrels, they would seem to plead for God, and imitate the Apostles who cherish'd weaker Brethren, and expell'd Fornicators and Offenders; but whilst they maze themselves in Contention for trifles, they seem to aim and endeavour at meer opposition, and fondly attempting a false Martyrdom instead of suffering for God, and the Devil's part, and by their misguided Zeal, fire the weaker part of Christians about their Ears.

Among Offences, such as are really so, I mean 'tis sad to think of the knavery and trickery of Church-Tells excellently express'd by the Poet.

*Traps set to catch the Weak and Pious in,
Whilst Vermin, Hypocrites fustle thro' the Gins.*

But above all 'tis most sad to see how men damn one another for these little differences, so that 'twas as virtuously, as truly said by Dr. Taylor, as there are an 100 Sects of Christianity, and every one damns the other, so is it 99 to one, but every one is damn'd by their own measure.

Had men as much Charity and Modesty, as they fancy they have Piety and Wisdom, they would never define Articles of Faith beyond what the Apostles have done, and did not they deifie their Judgments to an Infallibility, they would never set so doubtful Subscription Articles as a choak-pear to frighten men of Sincerity and tender Conscience from their Ministry.

Further, as to Ceremonies, are we not asham'd, as the Apostles expresses it, to return again to our beggerly Elements? What shall we never forsake Judaism, the Sanctity of Priestly Order and Form? What shall we still prefer trifles, formalities, nick-nam'd decencies before brotherly Love, and by catching at Shadows, lose Substances? Has not St. Paul assur'd us that such Snubble and

and straw shall be consumed away in the day of Refining and Purification.

Sanctity's in the Heart, not in a Dress, Gesture, or Form; we are to observe the Sabbath, but how? Not to Superstition and superfine Nicety: Christ vindicated his Disciples in plucking the Ears of Corn on that day, he healed the withered Hand then, and told us, we ought to relieve our Sheep, or Ox from the Pit then.

To conclude, what is more Holy than the Sabbath, and consequently what more Meritorious of Ceremony? But if our Saviour instructs us to be rather rationally than formally Holy in the Sabbath, and thus excludes little *Mosaical* Ceremony; Are we Fools, are we Mad-men, to run our selves again into Bondage? Why do we not keep Saturday with the *Jews* again? And why does not every one that loses a day by travelling round the World, set himself a new Seventh day, a new Sabbath?

So you pray kneeling, the *Jews* used standing, and the *Psalmist*, and some of the Zealous Prophets were for falling with their faces to the Ground. One fancies a Surplice, another a little Cloak, a third must have a Cross upon his back; where is the difference between these? The Formality is nothing, the Ceremony idle; God looks for nothing but the Heart in all. Indeed *David* eat the Holy Shew-bread when he was an hungry, and was guiltless.

CAP. VII.

Sects, Heresies.

When the Holiness of Professors of Religion is in decay, and full of Scandal, when the Times are stupid, ignorant, and barbarous, you may doubt the springing up of a new Sect, the Season is ready, if the Seed be sown, you need not fear but a busie Wit will raise it; if it be Rebellious and Voluptuous, 'tis like to be popular, but easily suppress'd; if by Miracles, it spreads slow, but sure; but if only by the Sword and Persuasion, it lasts no longer than the force of Hand and Argument continues.

The best Method, as well in Prudence as Conscience, to suppress such Sects is, impartially to Reform Abuses, compound Differences, to proceed mildly, and not with sanguinary Persecutions, lest we fight against God; rather to take off the principal Authors, by winning and advancing them, than to enrage them by violence and bitterness.

This was *Gamaliel's* Advice; but now as a Christian I add, that we ought to Examine before we Condemn? Heresie is the common word of Railing: *St. Paul* was called an Heretick, the Jews reproach'd him with it: As therefore 'tis not just, from Report to Condemn one that we have not known guilty, so is it partial to call an unexamined Opinion Heresie.

Under the shelter of this Crime *Rome* stifles Truth, burns her Adversaries, their Books, and makes a Rod of Iron, nor Brotherly Love, the Bond of Communion: *Rome*, that common Enemy of the World, that will not suffer her Subjects to be Loyal, nor her Princes to study the Publick Good; *Rome*, that Den of Murderers, Perjurers, and Equivocators, that makes it impossible for a Man to be Religious and Honest, that instead of making Christianity the Blessing of the World, makes it the common Curse.

Tantum

Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.

Charity was the Apostles Bond of Communion, and their Sword against Offenders Excommunication; Hereticks with them were those that would make new and uncharitable Divisions by false Impositions, then the immodesty of Hereticks, and their spiritual Pride, were Scourges enough to confound them, they were remarkable as Fire-brands; and now too, did we only embrace the Text without Explanations, Heresies would pine and dye for want of room to be regarded.

Further, Heresies are properly in private Persons, not Churches; as for Churches, they are either Christian, or not; if Christian, to be born with in Charity; if not, to be avoided: But as for Hereticks, they may be in the best of Churches, when Men proudly disdain Communion with weaker Brethren, and break the Liberty the Apostle establish'd, that every Man might stand as he was call'd.

To conclude, to err is necessary in humane Frailty, to err with my will, is in my power to hinder, to avoid, to err simply, is misfortune; but to err wilfully, proudly, is Devilish, Heretical. *Errare possum Hereticus esse nolo.* Heresies and Schisms in a Church of Piety and Wisdom, are weak, creep among the Mobile, and skulke, as it were, *incognito*; in a Church corrupt and superstitious are dangerous, ruinous, affect the Wise Men, the Religious, and Sincere, and want nothing less than Dragoons and Faggots to root them out.

CAP. VIII.

Reconciler, Reformer.

AR. T. thou sorry, my Friend, that we have such Variances, such different Ideas? Thou art sorry then because we are not Angels; for as we are Men, we cannot but err; if we err, 'tis impossible but we must differ. What remains then to reconcile us, or preserve Peace, but Charity, Divine Charity? Let us follow that therefore, and not seem to quarrel with God, because he has not made us otherwise; indeed even the Apostles themselves were not free from little Animosities, *Acts* 15. 38, 39.

Think of this, my Friend, and pity Mankind in their weakness; do not enter into Contention, but bear with a Mercy like God's; never despair, but do all thou canst to Reform them; and be not angry, if they are not exact, 'tis more than humane to be so; besides, if thy design miscarry, be not discourag'd, thou must do thy best, and yet expect still that God works his own way. Remember what *Luther* said to *Melancton*, when he was anxious about the Success of the Reformation, *Desinat Melancton, esse rector mundi*, Do not take upon thee, *Melancton*, the cares proper to God; For tho' Man may Reason even divinely, yet only God can give conviction, and dissolve the stubborn Heart.

Now, the best Method to Reconcile and Reform Differences in Religion, as appears by what I have said before, is to impose nothing, to re-assume the Apostolick Liberty; compliance is most likely where there is most Judgment, and I fear, if the Magistracy trespass in imposing a Uniformity, tho' never so innocent, the People will hardly ever be induc'd to a Submission to it, tho' never so Reasonable, almost for the very imposition sake.

Nay

Nay further, I Prophecy again with *Machiavel*, that if in the Reformation there be the least Branch, the least Fibre of Priest-craft left, that little failure shall spread by degrees and years, to a fresh Gangreen, and the whole Body in time shall degenerate to a Popish Hierarchy, or what shall be as bad, or worse.

To conclude, if you say such Reformation is not necessary, see how without it you can Answer *Pax Vobis*, that Popish Pamphlet, that too true Satyr upon Protestants: See how you can justify your Protestant Differences, your proceedings that make you appear like Mad-men. Remember what Christ said, *If a Kingdom be divided against it self, how can that Kingdom stand?* Consider therefore, weigh Matters aright, and be wise.

PART V. CAP. I.

Controversie.

1. **W**Hat is Controversie? What the ground of it? Men impose Doctrines they know not what themselves, and then quarrel with one another about them, when too often neither is in the right; and then the same Controversial Pride makes them Eternize their uncharitable Debates by holy Terms, forsooth, Transubstantiation, Homocousios, &c. and when the Chimera's thus settled, then no body is Orthodox that cannot subscribe to their crudities, then these sick-brain Figments must be touchstones of true Holiness and Sincerity.

2. Now to shew you the unreasonbleness of such Impositions, such Controversial Disputes, I shall offer at the head of all the Trinity, not that I desire to render Christianity to scorn, or that I would advise to impose any thing else, for I could freely wish an Anathema on all Impositions; but by displaying Arrianism, if Men's sense be not quite fear'd, I will at least shew that in reason we should leave our selves to the Apostle's Creed, and so impose neither, and according to my dealing with this Imposition, I would advise my Reader to be careful in his Charity in others.

3. *Note*, I shall only copy a late Popish Pamphlet as to the main, being a Comparative Dialogue of the Trinity and Transubstantiation, never as yet satisfactorily answered.

CAP. II.

Trinity, general Scripture, Authority.

THE Father is our God distinct and solely, the Son our Lord distinct and wholly, and the Holy Ghost only our Spirit, or Comforter, *Eph.* 4. 4, 5, 6. *1 Cor.* 8. 5, 6. and God by his Son impowers the Holy Ghost to exert all Operations of Grace, *Eph.* 2. 18. *1 Cor.* 12. 3, 4, 5, 6. and thence came Prophecies to cease, while the Son was incarnate.

Now as the Father impowers the Holy Ghost through the Son, so are their Records one, *1 John* 5. 7. and this Record in the Father is called Operation, in the Son Administration, and in the Holy Ghost Gift, *1 Cor.* 12. 3, 4, 5. and the manner of Gift in the Father is called Love, the Son Grace, the Holy Ghost Fellowship, *2 Cor.* 13. 14. *Rom.* 15. 16.

That one is properly to be understood thus, you may perceive by *John* 17. 21, 22, 23. *John* 10. v. 30. to the 38. *1 Cor.* 3. 8. and as they are thus one, we are baptized in all their Names, *Mat.* 28. 19. as our Governours, that is by one Spirit into one Body, which is Christ, *1 Cor.* 12. 13, 27. *1 Cor.* 10. 2.

That they are all three Persons Articles of our Faith, is most true, but there they are not rank'd together; nay, not only so, but they have various and subordinate titles, to wit, God, Lord, and Holy; so likewise the ancient Doxology before it was alter'd, was Glory be to the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Ghost, (see *Sparks* on the Liturgy) but when *Athanasius* prevail'd, it was turn'd as it is now in favour of his Opinion.

To conclude, if we observe *St. John* in the Revelations, particularly appoints all absolute Honour and Power, and Throne to the Father, secondary to the Son, and none to the Holy Ghost, when he makes with the Son part of the attendance about the Throne, *Rev.* 5. 8, 9. &c. 6. 16. - 7. 15, 16, 17. - 11. 15. - 12. 10. - 14. 4. - 20. 6. 21. 22. - 22. 1.

CAP. III.

Councils, Trinity, General Tradition.

AS for the Tradition of the Trinity, 'tis hard the Apostles words should vary from their Writings, it may be possibly a Tradition like the *Jews*, that may make the Law of God of none effect; but such Tradition we have little reason to regard; however, I challenge any Man, either by Scripture, or common Tradition more strongly, largely, and expressly to prove the Divinity of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, then *Heb.* chap. 1. and *John* 16. 12, 13, 14, 15. do derogate, destroy, and confound them, and upon this offer, let us bury little scattering Phrases and Expressions, as uncertain as Figures, Allegories, Metaphores, and Hyperboles, in neglect and oblivion.

But further, if we examine the compleat Rise of the Tradition of this Doctrine, it was but in the third Century when it was so far from being uninterrupted, that the Council of *Ariminum*, Pope *Liberius* A°. 352, and Pope *Felix* the second, A°. 358. declar'd against it, and as for the Authority of general Councils, it's said of one in Contempt, that the Holy Ghost was brought thither from *Rome* in a Cloak-bag, and as for others, see but *Martel* of Creed-making, how corrupt they were, so that well may the Church be given up to believe a Lye, as the Apostle foretells, *2 Thef.* 2. 11. when they idolize their uncharitable Definitions and Impositions.

Above all, I cannot but take notice how the *Trinitarians* in practice destroy the Tradition of the Doctrine; they would maintain all their Prayers, are to the Father exclusively, and, as for the Son and Holy Ghost, they bring them in only as Ministers, a Mediator and Comforter, whereas if they were just to their Principles, they ought to honour all alike, to pray to all equally.

CAP. IV.

Trinity, Worship, Idolatry.

THE first Commandment settles supream Worship wholly on the Father, and makes the communicating of it Idolatry ; as for our Honour we are to pay to the Son, the Scriptures call it Mediation, *Phil.* 2. 9. *John* 14. 13. *Acts* 4. 10, 11, 12. *Rom.* 1. 8.—5, 11. *Col.* 3. 16, 17. but yet not so as that we should pray to him for our Mediation, no more then we are to pray to him for any thing else, *John* 16. 23, 26.

As for that Text, *Heb.* 1. 6. the following verses, 7. 8, 9. shew it not to be intended of the supream Worship, but as is mentioned, *Rev.* 5. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. because God for his Excellency and Worthiness has appointed him that Honour.

Further to account, *2. Cor.* 13. 14. for supream Adoration, were to make, *Gen.* 48. 16. so too ; and as for Worshipping the Holy Ghost, there is no mention made of it in the whole Scripture, and when there is no ground for such Worship, one had as good make 300 Persons in the god-head as three, and the Worshipping the Host is no greater, no faller speculation of God then this.

But to explain this further, the Trinity destroys the very nature of numbers, which in all reason ought to be applied in Obedience to the first Commandment, since the three Persons have apparently various intellectual Powers, *Mark,* 13. 32. *John,* 16. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. *John,* 12. 49. and one had as good call all mankind one Man, *Gen.* 6. 3. as three Gods one, and worship all the Host of Heaven, though different in Persons, because possibly by our weak supposals we may fancy they have all the nature of God in them.

But

But yet though such Worship be Idolatrous, and consequently Odious, yet ought it not to deter us from our reasonable Liberty ; thus, as I have formerly manifested the *Socinian* may communicate with the Church of *England* Service : and thus *Naaman* got leave from *Elisba* in Ceremony, to attend his Prince at Idolatry, and yet in such cases in Piety to God, and to avoid Hypocrisie, we ought to divulge our Resolutions.

C A P. V.

God the Father.

THE Father is the one, *Zeck.* 14. 3. *Mark.* 12. 29. only true. God, *John.* 17. 3. only good, *Luke.* 18. 19. only wise, *Rom.* 16. 27. greater than the Son, *John.* 14. 28.—10. 29. only sits upon the Throne, whilst the Son and Holy Ghost are as his Attendants, *Rev.* 4. 2. —5. 6. 7. *Esdra.* 2. 42. verse, *usque* 48. and his Name is, *I am.* *Exod.* 3. 14. in opposition to *a* and *e*, *Rev.* 3. 14. one signifying a pure infinite Being, the other the first and great Creature.

CAP. VI.

God the Son.

THE Son is often called God, as *John*, 1. 1, 2. *Rom.* 9. 5. though not *ſeſſe*, *eminenter*, but that makes him not therefore the ſupream God, becauſe God is a Title ſometimes given to Creatures, *Exod.* 22. 18. *2 Cor.* 4. 4. and that 'tis ſo intended to the Son; you may ſee *John*, 10. 35, 36. *1 Cor.* 8. 4, 5. where he is declar'd only to be Lord by *π*, which is a Title ſubordinate, and inferiour to God, *Eph.* 4. 5, 6. *Phil.* 2. 11. for in reality the Son of God, *John*, 19. 7.—20. 31. and the Universal Lord, *Acts*, 2. 36.—10. 36. are Chriſt's principal Titles, and where he is declar'd to be God, 'tis expreſſly mentioned in Subordination to the Father, *Heb.* 1. 8. 9. and in his higheſt Glory and Exaltation he is always put under the Father, *1 Cor.* 10. 27, 28. *Rev.* 3. 12. *Phil.* 2. 11. *John*, 20. 17. *Eph.* 1. 17, 20. 21. 22.

As for *Phil.* 2. 6. where Chriſt is ſaid to be equal to God, that Text is plainly interpreted to a Universal Lordſhip under God, by verſes, 9. 10, 11. following, and therefore deſerves no confutation; and as for his forgiving Sins, that it was not his own Power, appears by his not being able to grant the Sons of *Zebbedees* Petitions, *Mat.* 20. 23. further, he declares he knows not of the time of Judgment, *Mark*, 13. 32. *1 Tim.* 6. 15. for the Father hath put all Times and Seaſons in his own Power, *Acts*, 1. 7.

Now the true Character of the Son in Scripture, is the beginning of the Creation of God, *Rev.* 3. 14. *Col.* 1. 15. *Eccleſ.* 1. 4, 9.—24. 9. for Righteouſneſs exalted to be God's Son, *2 Pet.* 1. 17. *Heb.* 1. yet as ſo wholly dependant on the Father, *John*, 5. 26.—10. 29.—14. 28. he is likewise made our Universal Lord and Ruler, *1 Cor.* 15. 24, 25. *Phil.* 2. 11. *Dan.* 17. 13, 14. *Ephes.* 1. 17, 20, 21,

20, 21, 22, 23. and Judge, *John* 5. 22. *Mat.* 24. 30, 31.—16. 27. and that word by whom God made and fram'd the World, and all things, *John* 1. 3. *Heb.* 1. 2, 10, *Eph.* 3. 9. *1 Cor.* 8. 6. whether visible or invisible, *Col.* 1. 16, 17. yet so as an Instrument only, *Eph.* 3. 9. *Heb.* 1. 2, 10. *1 Cor.* 8. 6.—15. 27. 28.

Upon what further ground Christ is called God's Son, you may see plainly, *Acts* 13. 32, 33. for his Resurrection, which God accomplish'd for him, *Acts* 2. 31, 32.—3. 35. and as for his being without Sin in the Flesh, it might be, because he was immediately God's Creation, when all things else were made by, and through him, and consequently more imperfect.

In the Old Testament the Son is all along called an Angel, *Eccles.* 5. 6. *Gen.* 48. 16. *Num.* 20. 16. *Exod.* 23. 20, 21, 22. *1 Cor.* 10. 4, 5, 9. and for distinctions sake the Angel of the presence, *Isa.* 63. 9. and so sometimes in the New Testament too, *Heb.* 1. 7, 8, 9. who taking Flesh upon him, *John* 17. 5. *Eph.* 4. 10. shew'd as much by those Agonies he was in, *Mat.* 26. 39.—27. 46. *Luke* 22. 43.

C A P. VII.

Holy Ghost.

THE Holy Ghost is a great Principality, or God, and Christ's Universal Deputy, *Acts* 1. 2.—2. 33. *John* 16. 7. and as so the giver of all good Gifts, *1 Cor.* 12. *Isa.* 11. 2. yet subject to the Son, and receiving his Authority from him, *John* 16. 12, 13, 14, 15.—15. 26. *Rev.* 5. 6. and thence I believe it peremptory to blaspheme his Evidence, *Mat.* 12. 31. for to lye to him, is to lye to God, that is through him, though he be in reality but an Angel, *Rev.* 1. 1.—2. 11. *Heb.* 1. 14. compar'd to *Acts* 2. 2, 3, 4. *Luke* 3. 21, 22.

Further, as God made the Son his Instrument in the Angelical Creation, so he sub-deputed the Holy Ghost in the

the Creation of Man, *Job* 33. 4. and of the Earth, *Gen.* 1. 2. *Psal.* 104. 30. *Job* 26. 3. and upon this account the Spirit is call'd *Eminenter*, the Spirit of God, that is the greatest next to God the Father, and the Lord Christ, and the most extraordinary Gift of God in his Assistance, *Acts* 12. 17. *Rom.* 9. 5. *Nehem.* 9. 20. *Rom.* 8. 26, 27. but both his being given, and sent, are plain Evidences against his Omnipresence, and God-head, *1 Pet.* 1. 12, and not only so, but no where in the whole Scriptures, is he either expressly called God, or order'd to be Worship'd; indeed he is said to make intercession for us, but that's a kind of *Mahometism*, to make God pray to himself, and in plain sense denies his God-head.

Thus far the Substance of the Dialogue!

PART

 PART VIII. CAP. I.

Spirits, general.

I Wonder so many doubt the Existence of Spirits, and yet are Christians, since the body of Scriptures must be false without them; for should we suppose Expressions about Spirits to be Allegories, we might as well suppose both Revelations to be Riddles, and their Regarders Fools and Mad-men.

'Twas an Angel brought *Israel* out of *Egypt*, *Exod.* 23. 20, 21. — 14. 19. that appear'd to *Cornelius*: Nay, further, what strange thing must that be, *Mat.* 8. 29. that in the possessed Man discover'd Christ to be the Son of God? In short, what Devil and Tempter is it we are commanded to resist, if there were no Spirit?

To conclude, the last Sentence is, to *depart into the fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*. And without there are Spirits, what would the Resurrection mean? And why would Christ and St. Paul so often oppose the Opinion of the *Sadduces*?

CAP. II.

Spirits Orders.

NOW, amongst Spirits, the Scriptures are very express of distinct Orders, as Gods, *1 Cor.* 8. 4, 5. *2 Cor.* 4. 4. Potentares, Principalities, Rulers, Dominions, *Col.* 1. 16. *Eph.* 6. 12.—*1.* 20, 21.

God is a Spirit of Universal Power and Extent, which tho' there be but one Supream, the Father, yet there are others, as Satan, who like an evil Air spreading over the whole World, have in a degree a Universal Power or God-head, *2 Cor.* 4. 4. *John* 14. 30. *Eph.* 2. 2. *Rev.* 12. 9.—20. 8. *Mat.* 25. 41.

As for the Supream God, the Father, he hath deputed the Administration of all good Gifts to the Son, who executes his Deputation by the Holy Ghost, *1 Cor.* 12. 3, 4, 5. *Rev.* 22. 12, 17. And in the Old Testament he call'd the Son his Angel in that his Deputation, *John* 16. 12, 13, 14, 15. *Exod.* 23. 20, 21. *Eccl.* 5. 6. *Isay* 63. 9. And thus are the Son and Holy Ghost two Gods likewise; and on this Foundation stands those Expressions, *Let us make man*, &c. *Gen.* 1. 26.—3. 22.—11. 6, 7. *Isay* 6. 8.

As for the Son, he is as Governour to the two lesser Gods, the Holy Ghost, and Satan; he administers the gifts of the one, *Rom.* 8. 26, 27. *1 Cor.* 12. 3, 4, 5. *John* 16. 13. and restrains the Temptations of the other, *1 Cor.* 10. 13. while they are in a perpetual War in us; that is, all Mankind at once, one helping us, the other tempting us; one comforting us, and the other accusing us, (*1 John* 4. 6. *1 Cor.* 2. 12. *John* 14. 26. *Rev.* 2. 13. *Rev.* 12. 9, 10.—20. 23. *2 Cor.* 4. 4. *Zech.* 13. 2. *2 Kings* 22. 21, 22. *John* 16. 7.—8. 38. *Nehem.* 9. 20. *1 Pet.* 5. 8. *1 Cor.* 7. 40. *Rom.* 8. 26. *Mark* 4. 15. *2 Tim.* 2. 26.) one having seven, the Number of Perfection, attributed to him, as likewise has the other, *Rev.* 5. 6.—12. 3.

Now,

Now, the Order of God's Administration thro' the Son, and by the Holy Ghost, appears more plainly, when, as I have said, we consider their gradative stiles in Scripture, Love and Operation in the Father, Grace and Administration in the Son, and Gift and Fellowship in the Holy Ghost, the lesser Power, *1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6. 2 Cor. 13, 14.* And therefore all Communication between the Father and Holy Ghost being by the Son, Prophecies ceas'd whilst the Son was Incarnate, *John 7. 39. John 16. 7, 13, 14, 15.*

As for Principalities, they are Spirits having Jurisdiction over particular Countries, and are sufficiently described, *Dan. 10. 12, 13, 20, 21.* And as for Angels, their several Messages described in Scriptures, suffice to shew their Offices and Powers, *1 John 5. 4. Mat. 12. 24. 18. 10. Acts 12. 15. 1 Sam. 28. 7. 2 Cor. 12. 7. Heb. 1. 14.*

To conclude, as we understand by the Scriptures the state of Spirits now, so may we well expect the state of our Souls to be hereafter; for the Apostle tells us, there will be different degrees of Glory in the Resurrection, *1 Cor. 15.*

C A P. III.

Spirits Existence.

AS Sound, Scent, Heat, Light, and Air, consist in the same place, and yet are all distinct, and all invisible Powers, so may we reasonably imagine purer Beings, as Spirits, very well existing within one another, and yet not confounding one anothers substances.

As to their Government, we cannot suppose them like Men bug-bear'd by Conscience, since Devils are entirely wicked, and obey no Conscience, and yet are in subjection to one another; therefore we cannot suppose but that the more pure and large Spirit (whether good or bad) exists within the less and less pure Spirit, and being there,

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Command, and rules him at his Pleasure, without his being in the Power of the less pure Spirit of being affected by him.

And although that Spirits may be invisible and imperceptible to us, yet that is no Argument, that they are to one another, unless it be the more pure to the less pure, and so possibly they may maintain their Governments by that advantage of gradual Imperceptibility.

The supream God exists in all, Rules all, and the lesser Gods within their several Potentates, and they within their several Angels, and so in their several Powers, and orders not all things according to the permission of the supream God, lesser Gods, and their subordinate Potentates.

C A P. IV.

Dreams, Visions, Temptations.

IF once, as I have said, we suppose Spirits existing one within another, as indeed cannot but be suppos'd of God, because he exists in all things; we have no further difficulty to apprehend the nature of Dreams, Visions, or Temptations.

The more pure Spirit is existing, as I may express it in the less pure, as we may suppose our Souls very well to be in respect of those great Gods, the Holy Ghost, and Satan, they at their Pleasures can represent Imagery, and Hieroglyphicks to us, or when they please imprint Ideas in our Minds, to move us to what suggestions they are inclin'd to direct us.

Now the several powers of Spirits in this matter may be pretty well guess'd at, only God Supream possibly may reach our Thoughts, lesser Gods may have power of Imagery, and imprinting Ideas, and Potentates, 'tis like only of Rule and Government, whereas lower Spirits may only have power of Conversation.

Thus we may conceive how God does regulate our Temptations; as being in all things, he sees all things; 1 Cor. 10. 13. and thus may we conceive our idlest Dreams, which we fondly attribute to Constitution and Inclination, may be of Temptation, since we know our busie Enemy, the Devil, is never weary of Assaulting us, and well may we then pray to God for his Grace, since the resisting so potent, so subtle, and so close and invisible an Adversary as Satan, were otherwise impossible.

As for the certainty of the Interpretation of Dreams, they require the assistance of a Divine Spirit, and not Rules, only to help us, witness the many doubtful Hieroglyphicks in them; for instance, *Philip of Macedon* dreamed he seal'd up his Wives Belly, whereby he expounded she was barren, but his Soothsayer told him she was with Child; Men do not use to Seal up empty Vessels, so that Books may give us a general skill in Hieroglyphicks, but never limit the true construction or limitation to a rational certainty.

Now, as to what regard we ought to pay to Dreams, Spiritual Suggestions, and Admonitions, I conceive in general this is our Rule, where, to the best of our judgment, they direct us to what we conceive to be good, we must obey them; where evil, we must slight them; we have no other way to know Trees, but by their Fruits, and in no other course God can expect us to obey him; for be sure, if he expects Obedience, he will allow us Conviction.

How foolish must they be then, that obey the dictates of every Spirit; Satan can transform himself into an Angel of Light, 2 Cor. 11. 14. And if so, and if Christ, *David*, and the best Men, could be tempted, surely he's weak that hearkens to every Spirit.

Nor are we less to regard Convictions by Reason, than by Visions; the Holy Ghost sometimes convinces us by our Reading, by our accidental Discourse with others; for indeed every good Gift, Motion, and Inclination proceeds from him, and he as much requires our Obedience where he convinces us so, as he does where he gives us Visions and Revelations.

The ordinary Motion of Grace is only an inclination to Goodness and Truth, *John* 16. 13. 18. 37. *Eph* 5. 9. *John* 5. 16. *Rom* 2. 14. 15. — 1. 25. and to the search of it, whoever pretends to more is a Prophet extraordinary, false or true, deceiv'd, or from God, for there is no mean in this case.

Further, if we are inclin'd to improve these Spiritual assistances to a kind of Prophecy, or Divine Magick, the Method is by assimilation. *Veniunt ad candida rectis columbae*, we must live piously, pray accordingly, and when we have made our selves agreeable to receive so great a Conversation, we may expect it according to our degree of Piety.

The Faith of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob* procur'd them Dreams and Visions, *Moses* his Zeal gave him a kind of sight of God, whereas *Elisba* and *Enoch*, for their exact Purity, became Translated: As, for Conjurations, they can be nothing but idle Delusions; they are not only senseless and irrational, but Traps and Deceits set by wicked Angels to ensnare us.

To conclude, if a Spirit, or Apparition appear to you, the Example of Christ in his Temptation teaches you to behave your self decently to him, (tho' the Devil) for he has leave from God himself to try you, *Joh* 1. You may answer him as Christ did, but not consent to any ill he proposes you; but above all, you must beware of railing Accusations against him, since it was what St. *Michael* the Arch-Angel himself durst not bring, *Jude* 1.

C A P. V.

Grace.

Grace is the Method of God in convincing and leading sinners to Righteousness; his Instrument in it is, as I have said, the Holy Ghost thro' the Son, but his Methods are various, as the Accidents that befall us.

The same Grace in one Man works in Reading, in another in Discourse or Writing, in a third, as a Seed long sown, thro' Recollection or Memory; the gentle Spirit God moves thro' Advice, the obstinate and stubborn thro' Affliction; some, like Job, God purifies by Correction; others, like Pharaoh, he admonisheth, but hardeneth thro' his judgments, but with all he by a kind of gradation hastens to a Crisis of Trial. Sometimes he withdraws Righteous Men as a Punishment to the wicked; sometimes he withdraws them from the evil to some; sometimes he warns Men by Dreams, by Visions, by Holy Men, and all this worketh one and the same Spirit, one and the same Grace, actuated by a variety suitable to the Wisdom of God.

Not is it less this Grace of God which did dictate Philosophy of Old, than what has communicated our Divinity of late; I must confess the Dispensation is greater, more glorious, but 'tis the same Spirit; and the Law is equally his, whether Natural or Reveald.

To conclude, Grace works not in all alike, 1 Cor. 12. All that were strong in Miracles were not filled with Tongues; even among the Apostles one had one gift, another a second, a third a third, and no one was full or compleat in Grace but the pure Christ Jesus; for even as in a Body were not fit to have nothing else but Hands or Legs; so has God disposed the whole Existence and Power of the Church in several Persons, as Instruments suitable to the Times, Seasons, and Opportunities decreed by the infinite Wisdom of God.

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CAP. VI.

Providence, Tempting God, Miracles.

AS for our estimating things, as Providences, or Miracles, every thing we esteem as good, we ought to thank God for, to esteem it as his Fatherly and tender care of us that we enjoy it; so likewise if any thing Miraculous happen, we ought to thank him for it, but not that we ought to be too credulous of Miracles neither, lest by our easiness we vitiate our Judgments.

Should any Man relate a Miracle in its self idle, seeming to be done in wantonness, or out of any ill intent, 'tis Blasphemy to believe it from God; it must be either a Lye, or an *Egyptian Delusion*. But if all Circumstances and Evidences necessary offer themselves, and we are satisfied as to Persons, and their Credit, I know not how in Charity or Justice we can disbelieve it; 'tis idle and groundless to fancy Miracles ever cease absolutely, tho' they are needless in the degree they have been. We see by *Cornelius* Angels are sent even to the Heathen, *Acts* 10.

Yet further, consider, as it has pleased the Divine Wisdom, to settle a certain course of Nature, which he seldom suffers to be violated by Miracles; so is it not Lawful to be discontented that he will not alter the ordinary course of his Providence: For us to desire that, is to Tempt God; thus Christ would not Tempt God, to have the Stones made Bread to feed him; or to fling himself from the Tower, that the Angels might have charge of him. So if we cannot hearken to *Moses* and *Christ*, *Lazarus* assures us we shall not have a Messenger from the Dead.

Further, by Enchantments, by Magick, we Tempt him, we leave the ordinary course, which 'tis presumption to do; so, have we a desire to approve the truth of what we say? Do we think our sincerity deserves to be
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confirm'd by Miracles? Let us submit to God's censure of us, if he thinks best to do so, we need not fear but he will let us have them; never Petition therefore such a thing, but with all the Submission imaginable.

To conclude, Miracles are God's Seal, which Christ carried in Perfection to stamp and mark his Doctrine with, as also did Moses; the Egyptian Magicians attempted to counterfeit it, but failed in the performance. Now, as it seems not suitable that the Divine Seal should be prostrate to every Trifle, so 'tis a Presumption too easily, so much as to desire it.

Glory be to God on High.

And we are linked as to Persons, and here we should know how in Obedience of Justice we can disbelieve it; it is the and grounded to fancy Miracles over-apply, they are needed in the degree they are needed. We see by Scripture Angels are sent even to the

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INDEX of the ESSAYS.

PART I. Choice of Religion.

CAP. 1.	OF Atheism.	Page 1.
2.	Superstition	3.
3.	Souls Immortality	5.
4.	Faith	6.
5.	Natural Religion	7.
6.	Reason	8.
7.	Tradition, Fathers	10.
8.	Martyrs, Confessors	11.
9.	Revelation's Choice	12.
10.	Scripture Authority	15.

PART II. Motive to Piety.

CAP. 1.	Of Creaturely Obligation	17.
2.	Christian Profession	18.
3.	Punishments, Hell, &c.	19.
4.	Death	21.
5.	Heaven, Divine Happiness	22.
6.	Eternity	23.
7.	Presence of God	24.

PART III. Method of Practice.

CAP. 1.	Of the Method to a Holy Life	25.
2.	Zeal	26.
3.	Religion, Practice, general	29.
4.	Daily	30.
5.	Humility	31.
6.	Self-Denial	33.
7.	Charity	35.
8.	Prayer	37.

PART IV. Of Sin and Judgment.

CAP. 1.	Of Wickedness, general	39.
2.	Conscience	40.
3.	Sin, Original, &c.	41.
4.	Perverseness, Scruples	44.
5.	Wilful Ignorance	46.
6.	Vows, Oaths	47.
7.	Promises, Leagues	49.
	CAP.	

PART IV. Of Repentance, Mortification	Page	51.
9. Judgment of Sinners		52.
10. Predestination		54.

PART V. Of Government.

CAP. 1. Of Reverencing Authority	56.
2. Obedience, general	57.
3. Civil	59.
4. Prince Deposing, Guardianship	61.
5. Change of Governments	63.
6. The Ally, the Neighbour	65.

PART VI. Of the Church.

CAP. 1. Of Persecution	66
2 Church-Discipline	68
3. Unity	70
4. Uniformity	72
5. Separate Congregations	73
6. Offensive Ceremonies	75
7. Sects, Heresies	78
8. Reconcoiler, Reformer	80

PART VII. Of the Trinity.

CAP. 1. Of Controversie	82
2. Trinity, Scripture Authority	83
3. Tradition	84
4. Worship	85
5. God the Father	86
6. Son	87
7. Holy Ghost	88

PART VIII. Of Spirits.

CAP. 1. Of Spirits, general	90
2. Orders	91
3. Existence	92
4. Dreams, Visions, Temptations	93
5. Grace	95
6. Providence, Miracles	97

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